

# MAKING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT A REALITY

**A STUDY OF THE SOCIAL PROCESSES OF  
COMMUNITY-LED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
& THE BUY-OUT OF THE ISLE OF GIGHA, SCOTLAND**

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# ABSTRACT OF THESIS

This thesis examines the concept of sustainable development with a primary focus on its advancement and implementation at a local level. The local level is identified as the site where significant potential exists for people to engage directly in the practice of sustainable development. Community is analysed as the social network where meaningful associations between people and place are established. The cultural transformation of values and ideologies that frame development trajectories is examined as an important means for achieving lasting change towards sustainable development.

This work is based on original ethnographic research that was conducted on the Isle of Gigha, Scotland following the community buy-out of the island that occurred in 2002. While working with the Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust and the development process for the island, research was carried out, employing the methods of participatory action research and co-operative inquiry, over a year and a half. This research concentrated on analysing the social processes that were enacted on the Isle of Gigha to increase the community's ability to better plan and manage a programme of sustainable development. The idea of sustainable development for Gigha that recognises the natural heritage and cultural heritage as its primary assets is a strongly supported ideal among the members of the community. However, to formulate social processes that allowed for the active participation of the island's population in development planning proved difficult, requiring regular scrutiny and revision.

Community development engenders sustainability because the important criteria for individual support of sustainable development—which includes active participation and citizenship, care for the environment, and human well-being—are learned at a local level through a strong and supportive community. Three social processes are identified from the Gigha case study as significant for the ability of people at a local level to participate in sustainable development: forms of decision making, planning sustainable development, and the professional facilitation of community-led development. These social processes establish the three main themes of this work. Though this work focuses extensively at a local level, it also acknowledges that a thorough examination of sustainable development requires a critical analysis of global development trends and the ideologies that frame and define meanings of development and social progress. Thus, each of the three social processes is approached through three distinct analytical lenses: a critical analysis of socio-cultural development trends, a local analysis based on the Gigha case study, and a discussion of how these processes can be strengthened to establish social systems/infrastructures that encourage sustainable practices and behaviours.

The majority of works discussing sustainable development describe the scientific and technological pathways for its increase. It is argued in this work that significant improvements for sustainable development require social change and direct transformation of values/ideologies that frame our understanding of the world and humanity's development within it. This work examines how the identified social processes can be structured to support experiential learning and critical praxis at a local level thus creating a stronger understanding of the sustainable development imperative. An analysis of the agency and capacity of communities to produce their own programmes of sustainable development is presented in order to demonstrate how individual values of ownership, responsibility and accountability are engendered to create a stronger awareness and commitment towards transformative social change. This analysis also addresses how professionals/practitioners can facilitate this type of lasting change towards sustainability.

## **DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK**

THIS THESIS IS BEING SUBMITTED TO QUALIFY FOR A PH.D. FROM THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH  
BY ROBERT J. DIDHAM.

THE WORK CONTAINED WITHIN IS OF ORIGINAL COMPOSITION BY THE AUTHOR.

THIS WORK IS PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED. THE PH.D. BEING SOUGHT WITH THE SUBMISSION OF THIS WORK IS THE SOLE DEGREE OR QUALIFICATION THAT THIS WORK HAS BEEN SUBMITTED FOR.

ROBERT J. DIDHAM

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## MAP OF THE ISLE OF GIGHA, SCOTLAND





## INTRODUCTION

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# *STUDYING THE SOCIAL PROCESSES OF COMMUNITY-LED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT*

INTRODUCTION-  
STUDYING THE SOCIAL PROCESSES OF  
COMMUNITY-LED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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## **0.1 Research Subject**

### **0.1.1 Sustainable Development-**

Over the past two decades, the ideas of environmental sustainability and sustainable development have grown in understanding through increased academic discussion of and popular awareness for such issues. It is the Bruntland Report of 1987 that brought the concept of sustainability to the forefront of environmental and ecological thinking, and it is also this report that provides the popular definition of sustainable development. 'Sustainable development is...development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs' (WCED, 1987). Following this report, a plethora of definitions and academic literature discussing sustainable development appeared.

Sustainable development is quickly becoming a buzz term for governments, corporations, and academics to assert affiliation with, but for every person who uses this term there is likely to be a different understanding of its meaning. In many cases, alleged connections with the ideas of sustainable development are either nominal or refer only to sustained economic growth; Shell Oil discusses their sustainable energy practices as a major oil and gas producer (Shell Oil, internet: 2 April 2005) and the Ford Motor Company heralds their sustainable policies while producing more sport utility vehicles than any other automotive company (Ford Motor Company, internet: 2005). A major reason for this problem lies in the fact that the subjects addressed as part of sustainability are quite diverse, and this feeling of immensity is often related to the lack of grounding for sustainability. Proponents of sustainable development attempt to address issues of social equality, environmental stewardship, and both responsible economic systems and development practices in the present while continuing to consider the needs of future generations. The ideas of sustainable development are often used to critique / challenge contemporary

development ideologies at a macro-oriented level, whether it be discussing the idea of global environmental commons or attempting to solve the major problems of social inequality between the developed and developing countries. However, there is a correlating concern for micro-level development practices where implementation of sustainable development has high potential.

Awareness of sustainable development has played a significant role in increasing the understanding of our interconnectedness with the environment and with humanity as a whole, and more simply it has made us recognise that actions do have consequences. The ideas of sustainability provide a unique theoretical platform from which a critical eye can be cast upon many of our current actions.

The concept of sustainable development is itself a critique—not only of earlier forms of development and its social and environmental consequences, but also of the way development has been undertaken in the past. The concept of sustainable development brings these ideas together and presents a fundamentally challenging shift in global politics creating, for the first time, an ethic which encompasses a challenge to the inevitability of poverty and inequality, which recognises not only the need for economic development to meet human need but also the imperative to halt environmental destruction, and which involves maximum community participation, empowerment and local activism (Warburton, 2000: 3).

The proponents of sustainable development are still attempting to produce accurate models of the process and to offer valid methods for implementing sustainable development. Many effective steps have been designed to achieve sustainable development, and the knowledge base supporting environmental sustainability has grown rapidly. However, currently this knowledge base is more adept at telling us what is not sustainable rather than providing methods of becoming more sustainable.

The first decade of environmental sustainability was marked by a heavy focus on the scientific and technological sectors. Much academic knowledge was created but mainly focused on the major environmental problems from potential climate change, global warming, rapid population growth, industrialisation and market economics. Sustainable development research addressed issues of infrastructure, energy production, social justice and other macro-level issues. Though the global perspective of sustainability has proved beneficial for providing credibility to the importance of the

environmental movement, the concepts of sustainable development often suffer because the global perspective does not have a simple agenda and a clear, singular point of reference. This weakness is apparent when looking at the coverage in the 1995 *Earthscan Reader in Sustainable Development* including chapters in: Industrialization and Pollution, Urbanization and Health, The Commons, Environmental Security and Environmental Institutions, and Environmental Economics. Where is there relevance to the life of the average individual in these topics? In fact, there is only one chapter on Empowerment that discusses the role of people and the lives they live in terms of achieving sustainable development (Kirkby, O'Keefe and Timberlake, 1995).

As the proponents of sustainable development have begun to focus more attention on the need for sustainability to become directly connected to people's patterns of living, there has been a growing discussion on how to encourage participation of people in the development processes that directly effect their lives. This focus has been grounded in the ideas of community empowerment, local politics, and participatory democracy as the essential factors for promoting development that is sustainable. The first major call for locally based initiatives in securing sustainable development was Agenda 21, the outcome of the 'Earth Summit' held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Since then, the idea of local level work to support sustainable development has been increasingly gaining momentum. In 'Local Action for Sustainability', Baines explains the basic need for relating sustainable development to a local level in his statement, 'Most people have an environmental horizon which is very local—the end of the street or the top of the next hill. Sustainability has first to make sense at that neighbourhood level, if it is ever to reach global proportions' (Baines, 1995: 14).

The call for local action to promote sustainability is intertwined with a new model for political action. Politics must engage the average person and build a sense of citizenship. In *The Local Politics of Global Sustainability*, Prugh, Costanza and Daly state, 'We need a politics of engagement, not a politics of consignment. A more engaging politics will be necessary to achieve a sustainable world of our choice, as opposed to one imposed by nature's unpredictable responses to abuse' (2000: 10). The Real World



Coalition furthers this message by supporting the role of community development,

If we want stronger communities and family life, we need to overcome the alienation of so many people from politics and local decision-making, and to bridge the gap between work and family life, and between businesses and communities. And if we want a political debate that faces up to the challenges that the new century poses to our ways of life and consumer values, then we need a revitalized culture of democracy and a new generation of informed and empowered citizens (Christie and Warburton: 2001: ix).

Involvement in the political decisions that help to shape our daily lives is critical for a movement toward a more sustainable form of development.

Directly connected with the idea of actively involved citizens who are informed and empowered is support for allying sustainable and community development. Community development is fundamental to sustainability because the important criteria for individual support of sustainable development—which includes active participation and citizenship, care for the environment, and human well-being—are all learned at a local level through a strong and supportive community. Martin Holdgate discusses this point in *From Care to Action*,

Too often, development plans and environmental initiatives (including national strategies) focus on the large-scale at the expense of the local. Yet the 'local' is the dimension of real meaning. It is the place where activities must be carried out, where complexities, conflicts and knots are apparent and not disguised by an abstract planning language, and where environmental care or disruption and neglect have direct, immediate and severe consequences for people's health, well-being and income (Holdgate, 1997: 228).

When we delve into the issues addressed in sustainability, we find that many of the main concerns of sustainable development are not about the technological and scientific infrastructures, but relate very directly to how people live their daily lives and the effects that has on the environment. To address these concerns we must begin to establish ways for promoting sustainable living to the average individual. For sustainability to become connected to new ways of living, sustainable development must be relevant to individuals at a personal level. By focusing on local-level community networks, this work will discuss the social processes that support increases in awareness of the issues/challenges of sustainable development.

### 0.1.2 Two Dimensions of Sustainable Development: *Critical theory and Practical solutions-*

In this work, the view is taken that sustainable development has been grounded by two distinct analytical approaches. The first, and arguably the earlier, dimension of sustainable development applies its concepts as part of a critical theory that addresses the apparent unsustainable aspects of contemporary (modernisation) development. The second dimension was a move from critique to solution and discusses means for practical improvement towards becoming more sustainable. Acknowledging these two distinct approaches aids in addressing the apparent inconsistencies and irregularities that exist in the theories of sustainable development. Since the approach of critical theory has meant that much of the focus by proponents for sustainable development has remained on issues that occur across a global context, there is a difficulty of translating this critique into means for practical solutions. While those who write about practical solutions often focus on issues at a local and regional context, there is then difficulty connecting these solutions back to the critique of the global context. The result of these two approaches, though both important and appropriate to the theories of sustainable development, is that it is often impossible to understand how the solutions being expressed by practitioners actually relate to the problems being critiqued.

Though this work advocates practical solutions for more sustainable forms of development as the main focus for engendering lasting success, it also attempts to highlight the importance of sustainable development employed as a critical theory of social development. The critical theory approach of sustainable development is used to directly analyse the underpinning ideology of modernisation theory and its implications for social development. Critical Theory, in the capitalised form, is associated with the work of the Frankfurt School and the ideas advocated by its members. This work employs critical theory as an analytical approach but does not specifically locate its arguments within the theoretical understandings of the Frankfurt School. The analytical approach of critical theory also has direct links with the Frankfurt theorists and their style of analysis, but it is also recognised as an approach that is used more widely in

the social sciences. Horkheimer began to outline the analytical approach of these theorists during his tenure as the director of the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt starting in 1930; many of his main essays on the analytical approach were compiled into the book *Critical Theory* (1972).

The starting point for critical theory as an analytical approach holds human beings as creators of their own historical form of life and investigates the power of ideologies in shaping this. The dialectical critique of knowledge and ideologies by critical theory challenges the objective rationality of modernity by arguing that knowledge must be subjectively tested through praxis and by questioning the attempt of empiricism to establish factual universal truths. Ideologies are viewed as creating societal myths, and though modernity and rationality are promoted for creating factual understandings of the natural world they are also seen as ordering human affairs based on administrative reasoning while limiting the influence of ethical reasoning (Simons, 2002: 8-10). Thus, this analytical approach works towards, 'unmasking traditional power relationships and revealing the ideologies that cloak them' (Connel, 2002: 131). Critical theorists test knowledge by the effects of its practical application and judge social development by the norms of freedom and happiness that it professes.

Critical theory's usage to analyse, 'the social interests ideologies serve by exposing their historical roots and assumptions, no less than the distortions and mystifications which they perpetuate' is a powerful tool for understanding the current challenges addressed in sustainable development (Bronner and Kellner, 1989: 6). Modernity and globalisation are significant ideological drivers of social development. Both provide the basis for extensive advancements in human knowledge and activity, but if we are to fully understand the reasons behind the "unsustainability" of current development trends we must examine the ideologies that framed specific activities as reasonable and others as unimportant. Though proposing a stronger role for critical theory may suggest a heavy focus on problem-oriented evaluation, the main purpose of employing the analytical methodology of critical theory is its ability to break beyond the bounds of narrow ideologically-defined views of what is possible. As de Sousa Santos suggests, 'Reality, however conceived it may be, is considered by critical

theory as a field of possibilities, the task of critical theory being precisely to define and assess the level of variation that exists beyond what is empirically given' (1999: 29).

This idea of a critical theory should be recognised as more than just a critique; the use of critical theory employs critique to investigate contemporary ideologies but does so in order to separate the investigator as far as possible from the constraining factors of these ideological frameworks. From this vantage point, the investigator is allowed a more in depth analysis of potential forms of development and a consideration of their benefits. As with any critical theory, the use of sustainable development as a critical theory required extensive early focus on a direct critique of contemporary development ideologies. This was done both to establish an understanding of the frameworks in which development theories were being created and as a means for the investigator to step beyond these narrowing ideologies. This second purpose thus allows the investigator to suggests analysis and practices that can aid in redirecting social development towards a pathway that is more productive towards humanity's goals.

Labeling the background of sustainable development as having its roots as a critical theory of social development thus suggests that part of the discussion about sustainable development is a direct discussion about the current paradigm that structures our understanding of social development. This discussion must both consider how that paradigm benefits and limits our processes of social development. Vincent Tucker is one theorist whose strong views against contemporary development practices stands outside the mainstream, but in his arguments for the use of critical theory we find a case for attempting to step beyond current development ideologies. 'It would seem that the model of development now widely pursued is part of the problem rather than the solution. The sooner we demythologize this ideology the better. It distorts our imagination, limits our vision, blinding us to the alternatives that human ingenuity is capable of imagining and implementing' (Tucker, 1999: 1).

Only recently in the literature on sustainable development has there been significant discussion on the idea of paradigm change. However, this discussion seems to be increasingly found in works by proponents of

sustainable development. During the first decade of focus on sustainable development, there was a division between proponents of what has been labeled 'weak' sustainability and 'strong' sustainability. The 'weak' definition is based on technocratic and market corrections of unsustainable practices, while the proponents of 'strong' sustainability argue the necessity for change of human behaviour.

The clash between the strong and weak definitions of sustainability is in fact between two paradigms: the conventional, growth-based one and an emerging ecological one. The latter holds that sustainability is closely related to stability and that fiercely competitive markets and the completely free movement of goods and of capital stand in the way of the development of a socially, culturally, economically and environmentally sustainable future (Douthwaite, 1999: 160).

Woodin and Lucas highlight this point by suggesting that these two paradigms can be seen in a 'dramatic clash' between the competing agendas of the WTO and the UN (2004: 38). The number of academic writings that still argue along the line of 'weak' sustainability is growing smaller. While the number of writings that suggest that sustainable development will require direct and fundamental changes to the patterns of human living is steadily increasing. It is in light of this understanding, that the success of sustainable development requires transformation to patterns of living, that critical theory becomes important. Critical theory provides the analytical lens for investigating the factors in our contemporary ideologies and worldviews that led to unsustainable practices and to consider what are those factors that remain beneficial in regards to the principles of social development.

#### 0.1.3 Case for Community-Led Sustainable Development-

The opposite dimension of sustainable development from its use as a critical theory is the production of methods for practical improvement towards becoming more sustainable. For this dimension to become meaningful though, there is a need to directly relate methods for sustainable development to the daily lives of people. It is argued throughout this work that it is at the local level where people participate directly in community networks that each individual has the possibility and the power for being part of a solution and working for social change. Through community

networks, people gain a strong sense of belonging as well as a sense of connectedness and usefulness. Furthermore, it is through working with one's community that we learn how to build and foster important relationships that can be truly enriching and fulfilling. Social ecologists suggest that understanding how to build and foster healthy human relationships is an important prerequisite of creating a sustainable relationship with nature (Baugh, 1990: 97).

Diane Warburton identifies two important elements of community. The first is to do with relationships among people, and the second is to do with relationships between people and the place in which they are located. Warburton sees relationships as being the strongest factor in creating a sense of community; strong processes of community development will thus focus upon improving the way we interact with people around us. In considering sustainable development, it is also important for the idea of community to include a sense of locality. It is through connection with their local environment that most people gain awareness of wider environmental issues (Warburton, 2000: 14-9).

The promotion of community development can be much more difficult however than the promotion of individual sustainability. In modern society, people are alienated from the process of community, and this is exasperated by the fact that the idea of community is often misunderstood and misrepresented. Community should be seen as a process that works for change and betterment, unfortunately many people conceptualise the idea of community as a type of creed that is less about toleration and more about homogenisation. This type of grouping of people based on their shared characteristics and personal traits usually creates a static collective, and it fails to grasp the development of a supportive system that seeks a high quality of life for its members (Warburton, 2000: 14-9).

For community development to really be effective, community must be understood as an active and continual process of improvement.

Community is not a thing, it is a dynamic process in which a shared commitment creates and recreates community through action by people who are aware and committed to the principle of working together for a better life and world. Community can then be fully understood as an aspiration rather than a definition, based on certain types of (caring) relationships in a shared place. This conjunction of ideas, which are not reducible to specific

space or time constraints but are to do with people's relations with each other and to the physical world, in which we live (and want to live), is what gives, and has always given, community its power and meaning (Warburton, 2000: 19).

A process of development may have short-term targets to be met and long-term objectives, but it should never be assumed that this progress will be completed for the community itself is always changing, and development must adapt to meet these changes.

Local-level community networks provide a strong basis for the realisation of sustainable development; the individual is often too isolated and the national government is often too removed when it comes to promoting ways of living that are more sustainable. More importantly, it is at the local level that people are most likely to feel directly connected to the pertinent issues of sustainability and to gain a sense of their own worth from being an active participant in sustainable development. Finally, it must be recognised that sustainability is not a blue print model, but must be a flexible and adaptive system that can meet the needs and the desires of diverse people and ecosystems.

Many of the problems that sustainable development is attempting to address are quite prevalent at the local level, thus allowing for public participation in creating solutions to these problems encourages a public awareness for sustainable principles. It is also at this level that each individual has the possibility and the power for being part of a solution and working for social change.

Although many actions can include political activism and organized efforts, perhaps individual actions and strategies can be considered even more important and more effective in the long run. Each person and family, through conscious choice, can simplify, self-provision to the extent possible, and recognize the impacts of actions on the local environment and surroundings (Green and Haines, 2002: 185).

At the local level, people interact with the natural environment most often and most directly, and people can be directly connected to the system of production and consumption (Green and Haines, 2002: 185). Here, a connection between sustainable development and the local level can provide a clear point of reference that is often missing in terms of sustainability.

Anthony Cohen's insightful discussion on community furthers an understanding that is quite beneficial for implementing sustainable development at a local level. His work *The Symbolic Construction of Community* breaks from the classical attempts at defining a community as a quantifiable structure, rather it suggests that the understanding of community is not cohesive or even agreed upon by members of a specific community. Cohen presents the idea that community is a symbolic creation. 'Symbols are effective because they are imprecise. Though obviously not contentless, part of their meaning is "subjective"' (1993: 21). Furthermore, Cohen suggests that community is not about the traditional belief of it being 'an integrating mechanism' and that it is better regarded as 'an aggregating device' (1993: 20).

Cohen continues his argument by shifting the discussion of community away from its form and towards the meanings that being part of a community creates. In order to accomplish this, the focus of the discussion must move from structure to culture (1993: 70). 'Community... is where one learns and continues to practice how to "be social"'. At the risk of substituting one indefinable category for another, we could say it is where one acquires "culture"' (1993: 15). Community presents an arena for individuals to cultivate relationships with and understanding of the social world around them. Because of the adaptive nature of community and the dimension of meaning and connectedness found in communities, it is at the local level through community networks where individuals are most able to undertake meaningful relationships with the development process.

A postmodern discussion of community, as presented by Gerard Delanty in *Community* (2003), provides an insightful interpretation into why community remains an enduring theme in social sciences and within wider society. Delanty argues that the postmodern community remains important because it presents the opportunity for, 'communicative belonging in an insecure world' (2003: 187). In fact, Delanty critiques Cohen's symbolic system of cultural codification as limiting recognition for a more radical conception of community that supports self-transformation (2003: 49). In order to fully understand the postmodern community, it is necessary to acknowledge the dilemma created for the identity of the self/individual



from globalisation and the postmodern turn.

Strangeness has become more central to the self today, both in terms of a strangeness within the self and in the relationship between the self and other. This experience of strangeness captures the essence of the postmodern sensibility, namely the feeling of insecurity, contingency and uncertainty both in the world and in the identity of the self (Delanty, 2003: 133).

Delanty argues that the need for belonging in a postmodern society becomes stronger as people are freed from the older cultural structures that created boundaries of belonging and in its place a radical pluralisation of potential means for belonging has arisen. Through participation in communication and discourse, new forms of belonging are created. 'It is not the power of symbolic meanings that distinguishes community but the imagination and the capacity of the self to re-create itself' (2003: 190). From this setting, Delanty suggests that a constructivist understanding of community must focus on its communicative capacity to create new socio-cultural bonds and codes of belonging. However, just as with wider society, he argues that postmodern communities are also fragmented and offer no finality of belonging.

Delanty's discussion of the postmodern community provides an important understanding of the communicative potential of communities to create new forms of belonging and through this new interpretations of the world around them. 'The power of community consists in the emergence of definitions, principles and cognitive models for imagining the world' (2003: 157). It is this power of community that makes it a necessary factor in the process of sustainable development because it is at the level of community where discourse about sustainability has the potential to find real meaning and practicality. Nonetheless, Delanty warns that care must be taken in this approach for if applied as a normative concept community may be easily institutionalised as part of an ideology of governance thus limiting the reflexive nature of the communicative community. Delanty concludes his discussion by suggesting that one of the most challenging issues for community in the near future will be the attempt to reconnect the sense of community with a connection to place because postmodern communities have merely substituted place with the aspiration of belonging (2003: 192-5).

If community development is to support sustainability though, community life must not only regain direct links with place but also with the larger social and political institutions. Lee highlights three important values that must coincide with sustainable community development:

decentralisation, grassroots democracy and community-based economics.

Decentralisation provides the power of environmental stewardship and policy-making to those who have direct knowledge of environmental and social conditions. Grassroots democracy is directly linked to the idea of active citizenship and allows people to engage in the development of sustainable ways of living. Finally, community-based economics aims not as much at maximising profit as it does at supporting healthy development, quality of life, and security for the community members (1997: 54).

Humans are removed and alienated in many cases from the social, political, and economic forces that presently effect their modes of living. Community-led sustainable development requires a strong focus on strengthening the public sphere and providing effective decision-making power to communities. Coinciding with the development of sustainable communities are the ideas of strong democracy, citizenship, and civic environmentalism. Strong democracy is concerned with citizenship as a lifestyle and is based on open and participatory communities. The goal of strong democracy is to reunite individuals as citizens working for a common good and the betterment of their community.

[Strong democracies] rest on the idea of a self-governing community of citizens who are united less by homogenous interests than by civic education and who are made capable of common purpose and mutual action by virtue of their civic attitudes and participatory institutions rather than their altruism or their good nature (Barber, 1984: 117).

For strong democracy to be successful, the benefits of citizenship must be tangible to those taking part; people must feel empowered and believe that they can make a difference.

William Shutkin defines the similar idea of civic environmentalism as:

[T]he idea that members (stakeholders) of a particular geographic and political community—residents, business, government agencies, and nonprofits—should engage in planning and organizing activities to ensure a future that is environmentally healthy and economically and socially vibrant at the local and regional levels (2000: 14).

Civic environmentalism is concerned with building a cycle that improves

and protects the natural environment and its resources, builds social capital, and advocates a sustainable economy (Shutkin, 2000: 15). When effective, this cycle should function in the form of a positive feedback loop that maintains the maximum amount of synergy within the community through benefits from each sector being redirected into the cycle rather than removed from it.

There are many strong reasons to support a claim that sustainable development must focus on the local, community networks, but the foundation to this idea is the fact that the theories of sustainability must be directly connected to transforming our patterns of living if lasting success is to occur. If we want to consider the idea of creating a 'culture of sustainability', it is recognised that it is through local-level community networks where such ideas could take shape and capture individuals' hearts and imaginations. If we want to facilitate more people directly considering their relationship with sustainable development, it is acknowledged that it is through local, community networks where relationships are fostered and where people can readily understand the influence of their actions. Thus, we must consider the powerful tools that the processes of community development hold in their ability to create meaning with direct relevance to people's lives and begin to investigate how to strongly link the processes of sustainable development with those of community development.

## **0.2 Research Questions**

The main idea for this work began to take shape as I learned about the process of community buy-outs that was occurring in the Islands and Highlands of Scotland while I was working on a MSc in Environmental Sustainability at the University of Edinburgh during 2001 and 2002. The idea of a community buy-out is for a rural community that has historically been under the system of laird-tenant ownership to collectively purchase the estate that they locally live on and to hold it under trust for the purpose of collective management. This process began with the purchase of 21,000 acres in Sutherland by the Assynt Crofters' Trust in 1993, though the purchase of the Isle of Eigg by the local community in 1997 is often noted as bringing the

potential of community buy-outs to the level of public attention. In the spring of 2002, I first visited the Isle of Eigg and was very impressed by the attempts of the local people to transition towards a form of development that would create a sustainable community on the island.

That summer, my dissertation for that MSc focused on the concepts of citizenship and community and how they were important factors for sustainable development. However, much of my focus on the idea of community looked at the work of intentional communities and eco-village projects to live in a more ecological way. This work left me thinking that even though the efforts of these intentional communities are extremely laudable, the lessons that could be learned from such communities were not that informative about the types of processes mainstream communities could use to transition towards more sustainable patterns of living. This I believed was something that could be better investigated in one of the rural communities in Scotland deciding to undertake a buy-out. From this point, the first general aim of my research began to take shape: *To investigate the practices used by a community in their attempts to transition to a more sustainable form of development and to consider what are the important processes that support this work.* A second aim inherently developed: *How can the lessons learned from a single community attempting sustainable development apply to other communities/groups working for similar goals?*

The following summer of 2003, I was completing a MSc in Social Research and preparing a PhD proposal. During this period, I visited each of the five buy-outs that had occurred: Assynt Crofters' Trust in 1993, Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust in 1997, Knoydart Foundation in 1999, Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust in 2002, and North Harris Trust in 2003. I was also attempting to refine my research focus in order to qualify which community I believed would provide the strongest potential for my future research. I began to consider what type of community I wanted to work with: a community in which pursuing sustainable development would mean significant changes to the way development occurred, a community in which participation of members in the development process was important, and a community that was still in the early planning phases of the development process.

Formulating more clearly what I hoped to achieve in this research, I considered what would provide the widest support for further attempts at community-led sustainable development. The first research question needed to consider the specific practices that occurred at the local level and was framed as: *What are the practical means a community employs in their attempt to develop in a sustainable manner?* To provide more general findings from this work, I wanted to consider what were the main processes employed by a community to practice sustainable development. This led to the second research question: *What are the important social processes that support community-led sustainable development?* This would require the detailing of what worked well but also to assess areas where there were weaknesses in the processes. Finally, I also maintained a hope that strong connections could be drawn between the findings on practice and process by applying a critical theory approach. The third research question was thus stated as: *How does the local level analysis correspond with the critical theory analysis of contemporary development paradigms?*

### **0.3 Isle of Gigha Case Study**

After spending time considering the research potential of the five community buy-outs as a case study, it was decided that the Isle of Gigha would prove the most beneficial. There are several factors that influenced this decision. The community on Gigha had carried out their buy-out more recently, and thus not only were they still active in the earlier planning phases but also the people seemed to be very focused on the changes taking place. The community on Gigha is much smaller than that of the other recent buy-out on the Isle of Harris, and as a small island Gigha's community is partially defined by the sense of physical containment. I was also highly impressed by the level of effort being put into the development process on Gigha and the strong focus of that development to be sustainable. The community on Gigha also received strong support for their buy-out and the following development from the government through local, regional and national authorities, thus there was a hope that this would allow the opportunity to gain an understanding of how the government can form partnership with a community's process of sustainable development.

A brief history of Gigha leading up to the buy-out will help to contextualise the study. The early history of Gigha provides a strong cultural heritage that the people of the island are still very proud of today. This history is seen best in many significant pieces of archaeology that still remain on the island including pagan ritual stones, the Ogham stone carved with the ancient Ogham script, ruins of Christian chapels with the earliest dating back to closely after the appearance of Christianity in Scotland, and hill forts built to defend against Viking raids. Some of the stories that connect to this history are still alive in the oral tradition on the island today. The history of the clans on Gigha is one filled with continual battle for control between the MacDonalds and the MacNeills. One of the main reasons for wanting to control Gigha was because its fertile soil has the ability to support abundant agriculture and benefits highly from the warmth of the Gulf Stream; in fact Gigha once produced enough potatoes and turnips to feed its own population and also supply Islay and Jura's population. The MacNeills of Taynish held Gigha from 1493 until its sale in 1790 to another branch of Clan Neill (IGHT, internet: 2004).

After this point, Gigha's history of laird-tenant ownership really begins and since then Gigha has had many owners. The laird's mansion Achamore House was built in 1884 by the laird at that time Captain James Scarlett. The recent history of Gigha really begins with the purchase of the island in 1944 by Sir James Horlick. His desire to own Gigha was so he could design and grow an exotic garden indulging his passion for rhododendrons. Horlick owned the Isle of Gigha until he passed away in 1972, during this period the island and its people prospered. Horlick was the traditional 'benevolent laird', and the thirty years surrounding Horlick's ownership of Gigha is often referred to by the local people as a 'golden era'. When I questioned one person why Horlick was so well remembered compared to other lairds, he replied simply, 'Because he is the only laird who has ever seen Gigha as his home'.

The thirty years between Horlick's ownership of Gigha and the community buy-out saw the island's sale and passing into new ownership seven different times. This period was marked by major disinvestment in the island with owners buying as land speculators and selling when property

values had increased substantially. Both the population of Gigha and its amenities seriously declined during this period. The population halved and the number of school age children being raised on the island dropped by two-thirds. Prior to the last owner Mr. Holt taking possession of the island, the previous owner went bankrupt and for over a year the island was controlled by the investment banks the debt was payable to. This period was the most unsettling because people were receiving eviction notices from their homes, and thus from the island. Holt put money into the estate house at Achamore, but he put little investment into anything else on the island.

When the sale of the island was announced on the 10 August 2001, the possibility of a community buy-out was discussed in a public meeting. The residents of Gigha had little background or understanding of this process except for the publicity the earlier buy-outs of Eigg and Knoydart received. Most people originally objected to the idea of a buy-out because they were not sure how the community could manage the running of the island, however they also felt that if they were going to make an informed decision there needed to be more information about the possibility. From this public meeting, it was decided that a stirring committee would be set up for the purpose of collecting more information. This committee consisted of six residents evenly divided between two in favor, two opposed, and two undecided about the idea of a community buy-out. Several studies were carried out with the support of the Highland and Islands Council assessing: Overall Island Feasibility, Agriculture, Housing Options, Legal, and Agricultural Leases. Though the evidence for the buy-out was compelling, it was not until after this committee visited the Isle of Eigg and actually experienced how a community buy-out was functioning that the stirring committee gave their unanimous support for the buy-out of Gigha.

The population of Gigha was provided with all the relevant information and the stirring committee's recommendations, after which the idea was put to the vote of the islanders and passed by seventy-five percent. The next step was to establish the Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust as a company limited with charitable status as the official body representing the residents of Gigha's interests. With the Trust established, the money for the purchase of the island had to be secured, a total of £4.15 million. The money was

raised from several sources: public appeal raised £1.5 million, £0.5 million was provided in the form of a grant from HIE, the National Lottery Scottish Land Fund provided both a grant of £1 million and a two-year loan of £1 million, and £150,000 was deferred for one year.

One of the important factors to note is that the main motivation for pursuing a community buy-out on the Isle of Gigha was the strong need to make a significant break from the system of laird-tenant ownership and the thirty-year history of disinvestment, decline and instability the islanders experienced. The Isle of Gigha is now part of a growing trend throughout Scotland to change the system of land ownership and to provide substantial support towards locally based sustainable development attempts. The idea of pursuing development that can be described as sustainable fits with the people's desires for a strong community that values its cultural heritage and natural environment, however prior to the buy-out most people on Gigha had only a small understanding of the ideas of sustainable development. This focus on locally based activity to implement a sustainable form of development for the island and its people has encouraged many interesting cultural changes on the island, a transition that has been invigorated by a community actively working to produce positive changes to the place where they live. It is through this course of being actively engaged in the development process that the people of Gigha have become aware of and taken an interest in the ideas of sustainable development.

Another important factor to note is that the Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust has benefited from strong partnerships with Highland and Islands Enterprise, Argyle and Bute Council, Fyne Homes and the Scottish Executive. The Isle of Gigha is the first buy-out to occur since the new Land Reform bill set an active role for government to play in community buy-outs, thus this was an opportunity to put policy into action. The support of competent authorities has been quite important in creating a development plan and for the Trust to be able to carry out some of the larger projects discussed in this plan. The link between the various governmental bodies and the Trust has shown a good pathway for governments taking an active role in supporting community-led sustainable development.



#### **0.4 Methodology**

The research I intended to carry out into sustainable community development was dependent on studying communities actively engaged in the development process. To complete an effective study, this necessitated that I was a participant in their attempts at sustainable community development. Since this research is based in real world experience, the methods I used needed to allow me to be part of that experience rather than an objective and non-participating observer. With this in mind I selected the methods of participatory action research and co-operative inquiry as the methodology for securing valid understandings of the relationships, difficulties and successes involved in a community's process of sustainable community development.

Action research has recently been promoted as a set of methods to obtain a better understanding of the issues that surround sustainability (Allen, 2001 and Ballard et.al., 2003). The main objectives of action research are to develop practical knowledge that benefits people in their day-to-day living, to contribute to the well-being of communities, and to empower the development of communities of inquiry and healthy social relationships (Reason, 2001). Action research is based on, 'act[ing] in intelligent and informed ways in a socially constructed world' (Reason and Bradbury, 2003). Instead of an 'empirical positivist' view to research that requires an objective hypotheses/ testing model, transformational action research suggests engagement and reflexive inquiry in the areas one is researching from (Foote Whyte, 1991: 7).

Participatory action research identifies three broad strategies: first person action research/ practice, second person action research/ practice and third person research/ practice. First person action research is concerned with the researcher and his or her ability to act through inquiry basing choices on awareness and best practice and to assess the effects of these actions in real world experience. Second person action research involves face-to-face relationship and how the researcher can foster the growth of mutual care/ concern. Third person research aims at creating communities of inquiry that can extend beyond the confines of face-to-face relationships.

Full action research will incorporate all three strategies, and it was this methodology that supported the investigation of the dynamics of relationships and how they function for supporting both well-being and change (Reason, 2001).

The idea of three separate forms of knowledge and their relationship to action research has been documented; the three forms of knowledge are representational, relational and reflective knowledge. Representational knowledge is the type of knowledge that is most often studied under the positivist framework, and it provides explanation through identifying the relationship between discrete variables. Relational knowledge is gained through a process of empathy or directly relating to the position of someone/something else, and it is critical in community life. Reflective knowledge requires consciousness raising and is manifested in visions of what ought or could be based on a sense of right and wrong (Reason and Bradbury, 2003). Action research promotes building and encouraging each of these knowledge types.

Employing the strategies and the three knowledge types, action research is based upon a set of methods that will encourage practical actions that improve human well-being. This process begins with the researcher through a path of self-discovery and awareness. The researcher needs to be mindful, aware and present in research/practice. This includes building a critical subjectivity; instead of attempting to be objective, the researcher should become aware of his perspective and cultural bias in order to recognise one's mental, emotional and social framework that shapes one's interpretation and understanding, and to be able to articulate it. As researchers, we must also attend to our actions and the impacts that they have (Reason and Torbert, 2001).

Max Elden and Morten Levin describe several characteristics that are important for an action researcher to hold. A researcher needs to be committed to the democratisation and empowerment of the community in which he is working. Furthermore, the researcher must believe in people's potential for self-management and for good management, and support this through the development of human potential and power equalization. It is necessary for a researcher to develop a manner of working and a vocabulary

that the communities he is working with can easily relate to. Finally, the role of the researcher must be held as that of a 'co-learner' including a period where he will 'fade out' and leave the community with the full potential and ability to take control of their own learning process (1991: 129).

Co-operative inquiry is one of the main approaches that can be used when the researcher moves from first person research to second person research. The main premise of co-operative inquiry is that good research cannot be done *on* people but must be done *with* people. Thus, the researcher must work in practice with a group central to the issues of research to address the matters that are important to them. Reason and Heron describe six important procedures that can improve the quality of knowledge developed in co-operative inquiry. First, *research cycling* between action and reflection helps to look at experiences from different angles, develop new ideas and try different ways of behaving. Second, creating a *balance of action and reflection* is crucial, though each research topic and inquiry group will find a different balance. Third, *developing critical attention* involves promoting in all participants a sense of inquiry and curiosity for understanding and can be promoted through research cycling and creating constructive challenges. Fourth, *authentic collaboration* between the members of a co-operative inquiry group can be facilitated through a process that secures equal opportunities for sharing and leadership. Fifth, since co-operative inquiry is about examining the groups individual and collective lives, it is necessary to have means for *dealing with distress* which can be scheduled into the group for sharing emotional feelings of the process. Finally, both *order and chaos* need to be equally embraced in the process of discovery that will undergo periods of confusion and uncertainty, but that these may prove the most beneficial paths to pursue (Reason and Heron, 1999).

Third person research and reflective knowledge is furthered in order to create a community of inquiry and empowering participants to create their own *knowing in action*. At this stage, the researcher attempts to understand the ways the community envisions their future and what their desires and aspirations are. To encourage this process, the researcher will often need to facilitate the creation of a strong, empowered community that co-operates

together to determine a plan/ vision for the future. It is also at this process where traditional forms of data collection become useful. Interviews, questionnaires, quantitative methods and historical research can all be used, but this should be done not as a form of extracting knowledge from the community but as part of the community's planning process (Reason and Torbert, 2001).

The goal of action research is to produce knowledge for improving living, as mentioned earlier, but this can create difficulty in assessing the success of practices and procedures used during research. Action research finds validation in two main forms: pragmatic validation and consensus validation. Pragmatic validation is directly linked to finding a balance between action and reflection. It also encourages a spiral design that continually acknowledges the casual relationships on which measures are based, thus each analysis and measure is likely to lead to a new requirement for research and action. Consensus validation involves the evaluations, interpretations and knowledge generated by the participants of the co-operative inquiry group and the larger community. Validity is linked not just to the researcher's own judgements and findings but that of the community for which the research is being carried out (Irgens Karlsen, 1991: 154-5).

During my research period on Gigha, I engaged with the community and the development process at multiple levels. Much of the research was carried out informally interacting with people socially at community events, evenings at the pub, dinner at a family's house, etc. Much of my best information came during these relaxed periods of friendship when people were often most open and honest. There were regular meetings held by the Trust for community input and feedback, these proved useful for learning individual opinions and popular sentiment across a range of development issues. For a handful of individuals, I shadowed them for a normal workday. I took up part-time employment in the hotel, the largest employer on Gigha. I participated in the working group for the paths and walkways and helped to open and manage the trail system. In regards to the development process on the island, I worked for the Trust on projects concerning sustainable

development. This gave me firsthand opportunities to lead community workshops to identify goals and priorities of development, facilitate an inquiry group to establish indicators for evaluating development, and to work on creating a development criteria.

The work I engaged in for the Trust allowed me several opportunities to be a direct participant in the development work on Gigha. During the first few months on Gigha while I was still establishing myself in the community and negotiating relationships, I also had the opportunity to extensively review the development plans and the supporting information that had been available to the Trust. The projects to identify goals and priorities of development and establishing indicators for evaluating development provided me with a chance to engage with theories of development through practical application. These projects also granted the opportunity to work directly with community members in their attempts to express a vision for their future. Besides leading workshops and facilitating an inquiry group, this work benefited from the use of more quantitative methods including the use of questionnaires, surveys and interviews. More so, I was able to engage in deep and informative conversations with groups of community members about their desires for the future that addressed questions such as ‘what supports (or would support) a high quality of life and well-being on Gigha’, ‘what are features of Gigha and its community that are highly valued’, and ‘what would demonstrate positive change towards the desired future’.

## **0.5 Structure of the Thesis**

The main hope of this work is to expand the base of knowledge for supporting practical attempts at sustainable community development. This work attempts to document the main processes of development that the community of the Isle of Gigha has undertaken in their attempts to create more sustainable patterns of living on their island. Critical reflection is engaged to describe what areas proved successful for Gigha and also where difficulty was faced. The case study of Gigha does not suggest a blue-print for sustainability, nor does it even suggest a perfect route to sustainability. Instead, the case study of Gigha provides a description of the methods being

employed by the people of Gigha in a valiant attempt to improve their way of life that has encountered many successes but also several difficulties along the way. The case study furthermore highlights the social processes that support the cultural advancement of sustainable development.

#### 0.5.1 Themes of Research-

During my research on Gigha, I began to recognise three main social processes that I felt deserved significant attention because they seemed to play vital roles in the overall process of community-led sustainable development. These three social processes were *decision making*, *planning* sustainable development, and *facilitating* community-led development. There are other themes that were also significant to the overall development process on Gigha, however I felt that these three processes were the most deserving of my focus. First, in regards to these three processes there appeared a need for discussing these topics with a direct connection to how they are readily applied at a local level and can strengthen practice within a community network. Second, these three processes seemed deserving of a strong social science based investigation as they all uniquely revolve around issues of human relationships. This thesis has thus been structured in three separate parts with each of these parts addressing one of these social processes.

Throughout this work, these three identified social processes will be examined in order to elucidate how they influence our actions, values, and understandings. It is argued that these processes are important for establishing practices and behaviours that support sustainable development. However, for this to occur it is necessary to examine the socio-cultural effects these processes can have towards either the replication of the status quo or to engender transformative change. Coupling these social processes with an analysis of experiential learning, we will later investigate how these processes may be framed to encourage value learning that supports sustainable development.

### 0.5.2 Multiple Approaches to Investigation-

Each social process is approached with three distinct forms of analysis. First, there is a discussion of how the process is relevant to the global context of sustainability and to critically investigate the understanding of this process in contemporary development contexts. Second, the process is described in its local context as was experienced from the Gigha case study. During this approach, the events that bring light to the relevance of each process are detailed, and consideration is given to what methods produced positive and negative results for the overall development process. Third, an investigation of how each process can be strengthened based on the generated understanding is presented. This includes an attempt to draw linkages between the global and local context of sustainable development and furthermore to acknowledge where there are difficulties in making such connections.

PART ONE

*DEMOCRACY, DECISION MAKING &  
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION*



## CHAPTER ONE- COOPERATIVE DECISION MAKING AND PARTICIPATION

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*'The questions of sustainability are debated gingerly in the highest councils of government, but in the arena of everyday life, where ordinary people make billions of daily decisions that shape the common future, hardly a word is heard on the subject' (Prugh, Constanza and Daly, 2000: 9).*

Prugh, Constanza and Daly argue in *The Local Politics of Global Sustainability* that for sustainability to take hold, one of the most important factors where social structures will have to change is in contemporary political processes. For the ideas of sustainable development to directly influence the way people live, new institutions that actively engage citizens in the decision-making processes on issues that effect our daily lives are needed. To this end, this section is concerned with decision-making for sustainable development. In this chapter, the current political context is discussed and critiqued. In the following chapter, the example of how the Isle of Gigha has begun to formulate a process of direct democracy is explained. In Chapter Three, the process of what decision-making in a more sustainable society may be is explored. A discussion of citizenship as it applies to sustainable development is presented in Chapter Four.

### **1.1 Why decision-making?**

The idea of decision-making is used here because it is the simplest, least sentimentally attached term for the process that is being discussed. By decision-making, it is meant to describe the process of making decisions in social groups and forming courses of action that best meet collective interest, thus drawing a distinction from individual cognitive decision making. Decision-making is separated from planning as a social process in this work for the purpose of delineating between the process of formulating development activities and the process of reaching agreement on collective decisions which includes, but is not limited to, those involved in participatory planning. The two processes are closely related and are often discussed together, but the purposes of the two processes demonstrate their distinctness. In most academic work, the topic of decision-making is usually referred to as within the democratic system. Democracy is also used

throughout this work because of its presence in the academic literature, thus let us start with a discussion of democracy and what it means/suppose to mean.

The modern systems that current societies label as democratic are claimed by many academics to be an unfulfilled version of democracy. Those arguing this point start from an ideal form of democracy based in the words origins, literally translated from Greek as “the common people rule”. One confusion that is often made here though is that ideologically there is a significant difference between what should be labeled as “democratic society” and as “democratic government”. While the former requires the latter as an operating part of the whole, the latter does not require that the values of democracy spread farther in society than to the institutions of government. Barber refers to the contemporary political systems as ‘thin democracies.’

What we have called “thin democracy,” then, yields neither the pleasures of participation nor the fellowship of civic association, neither the autonomy and self-governance of continuous political activity nor the enlarging mutuality of shared public goods—of mutual deliberation, decision, and work. Oblivious to that essential human interdependency that underlies all political life, thin democratic politics is at best a politics of static interest, never a politics of transformation; a politics of bargaining and exchange, never a politics of invention and creation; and a politics that conceives of women and men at their worst (in order to protect them from themselves), never at their potential best (to help them become better than they are) (Barber, 1984: 24-5).

The last part of the above quote by Barber, the idea that contemporary political systems conceive of people at their worst rather than at their potential best, provides an important insight to the creation of these modern versions of democracy. The history of modern democracy extends back to the Enlightenment era when there was a debate raging over the “innate nature of human beings” and whether it was one that was “virtuous” or “savage”. From this, the idea of the “social contract”, the concept that humans form social structures for both aiding mutual benefit and to curtail unacceptable behaviour, was discussed and used to justify the establishment of social institutions and laws. The idea referred to by Barber of conceiving people at their worst or at their best had important implications on the levels of intervention and authority granted to the state. Much of the discussion focused on legitimising certain levels of control and restraint put on the

demos (common people) by the state, and in doing so the importance of promoting democratic methods for the demos to participate in the decision-making process of the state and support for a democratic society fell second to this desire to control and regulate the moral and ethical behaviour of people through the authority of social institutions. This allows for an interesting contemplation, what would governments have been structured like following the Enlightenment era if Rousseau's ideas about the artificialness of social institutions and the need for sovereignty to remain in the hands of the people had proven more influential than did Hobbes's ideas on the need for a Leviathan to have absolute authority over people's behaviour?

Many of those critically discussing ideas of democracy critique the modern form of democracy under the nation-state, government by representational assembly, as being very limited towards promoting the democratic ideal of rule by the common people. This discussion centres on the main question: does voting as a main form of political activity for citizens empower a sense of self-participation within the political process? Frey and Stutzer's recent work (2005) presents some interesting arguments for more opportunities of participating in political processes. Studying 'procedural utility' and its connections to well-being, they attempt to understand the connection between political participation and the sense of self-determination. This research was based on connecting existing data on levels of subjective well-being throughout Switzerland to the variant levels of participation that occur in the nation's twenty-six cantons. Direct democratic instruments mainly exist in the form of referendums and are employed at differing levels in each canton. A fifteen percent rise in levels of participation was found to correlate with a three percent rise in the population expressing a high level of well-being. Besides identifying a strong correlation between higher levels of participation and higher levels of subjective well-being, Frey and Stutzer are also able to use information on well-being from non-nationals to differentiate between outcome utility and procedural utility since these foreigners benefit from the outcome of decisions made but do not have the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. The findings show that foreigners in cantons with higher levels of participation have an increase in levels of subjective well-being that is only at a level of

one third of that which nationals in those cantons experience; from this finding it is possible to suggest that two-thirds of the perceived benefit of participation is actually in its procedural utility rather than its outcome utility (Frey and Stutzer, 2005: 90-111).

Those making a critique of modern representational democracies often suggest that the strong dependency on voting as the main form of expressing one's political beliefs is not an effective form of participating in the formation of policies and laws. Burnheim discusses the question 'How can votes express preferences?' and comes to the conclusion, 'Mere voting tells us very little because it registers so little' (1985: 83). However, Frey and Stutzer's work on participation in the form of referendums demonstrates that certain forms of voting do empower a sense of self-determination.

In an earlier work, Benz and Stutzer (2004) study the relationship between referendum voting and the political awareness of citizens. Focusing on both the difference between countries in Europe that did and did not have a referendum vote over joining the European Union and again the variation of referendum usage in the twenty-six Swiss cantons, they study the levels at which citizens are informed about political issues in direct relationship to the level at which they participate in policy making via referendum. Both cases faced some statistical outliers, but Benz and Stutzer claim that the information does demonstrate a correlation between higher levels of participation and the level at which citizens are politically informed. In regards to the EU case, the difference between using a referendum and not using one resulted in a difference of levels to which citizens were informed that was similar to the difference seen between those in the lowest income category and a middle income category (Benz and Stutzer, 2004: 31-59). This is a very important idea because the opponents of more participatory political institutions often suggest that the common person is too ignorant of political issues to be able to participate effectively. However, Benz and Stutzer's work supports the idea that people will actively acquire a larger amount of political information when asked to make informed decisions, and it is in countries that have very limited opportunities for participation where people are likely to be most ignorant of political issues.

Nic Marks working for the New Economics Foundation has carried out a study of democratic influence, citizens' ability to influence the decision-making process of the political systems, throughout Britain. The work is based on using the Index of Democratic Power (IDP) that was launched for this study. This is a measurement of the potential of a constituency changing hands during an election and is adjusted for the size of the electorate. For this work, Marks analysed over six thousand constituency results for Britain from 1954 until 2005. Though this fifty-year period saw the government in Westminster change five times, there has only been a change of hands for eleven percent of the total seats. The study concludes that only 2.6 percent of the UK electorate has what could be classified as a fair share of democratic power. Furthermore, he suggests that democratic power in Britain is more unevenly distributed than income with thirty percent of the electorate holding seventy percent of the available democratic power. However, Marks also concludes that the use of a proportional representation system rather than the common first-past-the-post system for the 1999 European parliament elections in Britain resulted in a much more even distribution of democratic power. The average IDP for this election was at 96.2 percent of full democratic power compared to the average 19.4 percent for other elections. Marks argues that electoral reform is necessary if the desire for fair and equal participation is one that is taken seriously (2005: 2-11).

Participation must be inherently tied to an idea of strong democracy for there is no way for rule to be by the common people unless the common people play an active part in forming that rule. Some critiques of systems of representational democracy suggest that these systems rely too heavily upon voting as the main method for participation, and in fact that voting must be considered a very weak form of participating in the government's decision-making process. In regards to a system that only uses voting for the election of representatives, this argument is relevant because voting for a representative provides only a marginal means for expressing one's own viewpoints on specific issues and policies. However, under political systems that use referendums, voting is granted a stronger connection with directly participating in the decision-making process of the government. There are differing views to whether voting systems can be reformed to allow better

participation through the use of referendum voting and proportional representation. For the stauncher critiques of representational democracy though, there is a suggestion that representational democracy will never provide the ideal of “the common people rule” because by its nature representational democracy creates a hierarchy of political power that is monopolised by an elite group and often supports majority / minority conflicts.

## **1.2 Participation: Tyranny vs. Transformation**

One of the most established debates in development planning is based on the idea of participation in the planning process. Proponents of sustainable development claim the necessity of participatory processes of planning for development activities to promote the long-term types of changes that are advocated. It is through participatory planning that the direct engagement of local people in their own development activities can be established thus strengthening their awareness of relevant issues and concerns. Direct engagement supports a stronger sense of ownership and responsibility among those who have the opportunity to actively participate in the planning process. However, the idea of participation by local people in development activities has created a wide range of debate over the past decade. These debates include concerns about the extent to which participation occurs, the tokenism of participation when it does occur, the appropriation of the idea of participation by top-down development agencies, the unchallenged championing of participation, and the control of participatory methods by elite groups.

The book *Participation: The new tyranny?* (Cooke and Kothari, 2001) provides a compilation of the main critiques of participatory planning that have occurred. The contributors in this book discuss the current downfalls in participatory development and attempt to formulate strong ways for improving the situation. Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari suggest the ritualisation of participation and the simplified, homogenous understanding of community has led to three types of tyrannies:

- *Tyranny of decision* – making and control – participatory facilitators overriding the existing legitimate decision-making processes
- *Tyranny of the group* – participatory decisions reinforcing the interest of the already powerful in the group
- *Tyranny of method* – the focus on participation driving out other relevant methods (2001: 1-8).

The formal and informal knowledge that is generated at a local level through generations of community involvement is referred to as “people’s knowledge”. David Mosse discusses the idea of “people’s knowledge”. Participatory learning and planning (PRA/PLA) encourages recognition of the relevance of “people’s knowledge”, or “indigenous knowledge”, in effective planning. The idea of this type of knowledge has to be highly contested though. First, planning agencies and project actors do not serve as passive facilitators, and their agendas often have a very direct effect on what type of knowledge is recorded and utilised. Second, without acknowledging power relationships within communities and assuming homogenous views, participatory learning can actually work to further exclude the disadvantaged. Finally, people will adapt their own knowledge to the structure of the institutional systems and often will focus solely on those areas for which development funding is available (2001: 19-26).

Participatory methods need to be meaningful for use by local people. New tools are being developed that use local facilitation methods such as song, dance and story-telling. These tools support communities to create their own development criteria and objectives. Often under the guise of participatory methods, NGOs have continued to determine development trends for local communities. The reversal of this begins by building upon what already exists in the community which involves acknowledging and working with traditional facilitators rather than using a rigid PRA framework for appraisal and monitoring. In the longer term, it is hoped that ‘this whole capacity building process is about confidence in the village in order to say “No” to organizations that do not meet the village’s requirements’ (Mohan, 2001: 167; citing Village AiD. *Beyond PRA*, 1996: 8).

The criticisms in *Participation: The new tyranny?* are quite legitimate. However, the type of participation that they are criticising is what is being exercised by external development agencies and during government-directed

public consultations. This is not the type of participation that supports community development and active local engagement in planning sustainable development. The form of participation discussed in this book focuses mainly on the methods of PRA as practiced by development agencies. This is traditionally what is referred to as “participation” and is based on gathering and taking local knowledge for use by the development agency that continues to control the planning of the development process. This is neither empowering nor truly participatory. Real empowerment and participation requires the local people to have the power and knowledge to deliberate and form agreement on what is the right course of action.

The type of participation that is practiced by many development agencies can be viewed as a methodological approach that is mainly concerned with analysis and assessment. PRA has remained focused on its techniques and methods as the means for increasing participation. Cleaver suggests that, ‘reviewing and improving participatory techniques cannot substitute for a more fundamental examination of the very concepts that inform such approaches’ (2001: 36). Though participatory techniques have become ingrained within the rhetoric of development agencies, this is often with more focus on the efficiency of project implementation than the lasting effects the participatory process itself have on the community. Furthermore, this focus on the methodological level of participation has lacked a larger analysis of the structural and systematic power relations that are present in communities especially in interaction with external development agencies. For international and national development agencies whom still retain control over defining project objectives and the funding of projects, the rhetoric of participation is often manipulated to mask their own agendas and powerful influence.

‘Most participatory approaches tend to study down to the local level, but more transformative approaches would also study the global economy and transnational organizations such as the major development agencies and be prepared to criticize bad practice’ (Mohan, 2001: 164). Participatory approaches of appraisal have valued forms of local knowledge, but they have provided little analysis of larger power relations and global systems that have a significant effect on development possibilities. Furthermore, the



participatory methodologies employ many forms of dualistic categorisation, such as insider/ outside, indigenous/ expert, and local/ international, that oversimplify the reality of interrelationships and networking that is actually taking place. For local participatory activities to be truly effective, they must address issues of the non-local and combine an understanding of local specifics with a wider analysis of global systems of power.

The book *Participation – From Tyranny to Transformation?* (Hickey and Mohan, 2004) was produced as a follow up to the *Tyranny* discussions and provides a compilation of approaches for addressing and rectifying the main critiques that participatory methodologies are subject to. One of the strongest calls that is made by several authors in this book is for an increased connection between participation and the idea of citizenship. “Participatory citizenship” links the idea of participation across the political, community and social institutions. ‘Extending the concept of participation to one of citizenship also recasts participation as a right, not simply an invitation offered to beneficiaries of development’ (Gaventa, 2004: 29). This dramatically shifts the requirements for participation, it can no longer be viewed as something a development agency engages in order to strengthen their activities but rather participation is held as an *a priori* human right in civil society. Furthermore, citizens have a responsibility to participate in its shaping and development of civil society. Extending participation beyond the community sphere to the political and social spheres involves not only strengthening of participatory methods, but also the strengthening of institutional and governmental responsiveness and accountability to its citizens. Gaventa suggests that if this type of understanding of participatory citizenship is to be applied, then there is a need for deeper assessment of both power relations and spaces in which participation occur (2004: 34-8).

Participatory citizenship is more than a methodology: it can be viewed as an evolving ethos that holds the right of an individual’s direct involvement in the structuring, management and control of social and political institutions as fundamental to encouraging sustainable development. In this sense, the call for participatory citizenship requires an evaluation and restructuring of institutions that mandate current power relations more than a focus on expanding methods for participatory

assessment. 'The question for participatory interventions becomes how they can enhance the "competency" of participants to project their agency beyond specific interventions into broader arenas, thereby progressively altering the "immanent" processes of inclusion and exclusion' (Mohan and Hickey, 2004: 66). Cornwall suggests that if participation is to move towards having transformative social effects then the real strategies of participatory citizenship should focus on 'citizens' political capabilities' and equip them with the knowledge, language and power to 'shape their own conditions of engagement' (2004: 85).

### 1.2.1 Not all participation is equal-

Based on the analysis of the transformative potential of participation presented in *Participation – From Tyranny to Transformation?*, it is possible to recognise clearly that there are many versions of what participation actually means. The call for a deeper form of participation as expressed with the ideas of participatory citizenship moves towards the objective of an actively engaged civil society that is responsible for defining and determining their patterns of development and the structure of social and political institutions. This version of participation that provides a rights-based justification for its usage implies a type of participation that is much more elaborate than that which is regularly practiced by development agencies through the usage of methods for participatory analysis and assessment. Rather than continuing with the theoretical explanation of what a deeper, transformative model of participation would look like, let us review a few of the distinguishing features between certain types of participation that influence the level of transformative effects they encourage.

1.2.1.1 Coping vs. Adaptive strategies: Development projects can usually be divided based on the type of development strategy they promote generally as either a coping strategy or an adaptive strategy. Coping strategies focus on a direct response to an identified problem. These projects are usually short-term and produce immediate effects. Adaptive strategies focus on changes to the larger patterns of development in order to be better prepared to deal with changing conditions. These projects are long-term and

may have multiple stages of implementation. Wanmali explains, '[A]daptive strategies move to go beyond the immediate impetus for survival, but rather are part of a broader household decision-making process' (1999: 4). For coping strategies, a pattern of development is established around need identification and direct project response. While for adaptive strategies, the pattern of development is less cohesive because adaptive strategies require first a vision of what type of future is desired and then second an identification of the systematic and structural changes that will need to occur to reach that future before specific projects can be planned.

1.2.1.2 Exogenous vs. Endogenous patterns of development: Another distinction that is defined between certain types of development is between exogenous and endogenous development. Exogenous development attempts to apply outside solutions to problem areas by attracting external capital, technologies and institutions to implement development activities. Endogenous development attempts to create solutions from within the local context that can be applied and carried out directly by the community. With endogenous development, Pretty and Hine suggest, 'The priority is to look first at what natural, social and human resources are available, and then to ask: can anything be done differently that results in more productive use of these available resources?' (December 1999: 3).

1.2.1.3 Participation as ends vs. means: The type of participation that is currently supported is most often described as participation as *means*, 'to accomplish the aims of a project more efficiently, effectively and cheaply', whereas the type of participation being suggested in this work needs to centre on participation as an *end*, 'where the community or group sets up a process to control its own development' (Nelson and Wright, 1997: 1). Though the literature on participation suggests that participation as an *end* engenders greater local empowerment, the focus continues to be on institutionalising the process, so development agencies can hand the power down from above – in the mistaken idea that they are able to give people "empowerment".

### 1.2.2 Participation as a Means for Empowerment-

Empowerment is a key part of sustainable community development, but proper empowerment is different than that which is often advocated in conjunction with participatory learning. Empowerment is not about asking communities to describe their needs and desires while continuing to hold the power and control to implement and manage the project. Community empowerment needs to provide communities with the knowledge, resources, and support to enable them to complete the full process of development for themselves from visioning through planning to implementing and monitoring. In the same context, communities practicing sustainable community development cannot isolate themselves and must acknowledge and understand the ramifications of the larger social and bioregional issues of which they are a part.

Martin Holdgate discusses community empowerment in *From Care to Action*, and he suggests six steps that must be part of the process of community empowerment:

- Provide communities and individuals with secure access to resources and an equitable share in managing them
- Improve exchange of information, skills and technologies
- Enhance participation in conservation and development
- Develop more effective local governments
- Care for the local environment in every community
- Provide financial and technical support for community environmental action (1997: 227).

This process of empowerment will depend upon forms of education that work to make the community stronger and more adept at planning and carrying out local-level sustainable development. There are concerns from past examples of participatory learning that the process of education can be manipulated, and professionals can influence the outcomes of projects by 'educating' communities toward one set of needs or desires (Mosse, 2001: 22-3). More so, many development projects have promoted solely the Western ideals of wealth, materialism and free-market capitalism as the goals that should be replicated worldwide.

Development activities influence a community's empowerment greatly. '[Empowerment] entails enhanced capabilities and wider scope for choice and action' (Chambers, 2003: 220). Chambers further suggests that

empowerment is not a product nor is it something that can be ticked off as being fulfilled. Empowerment is a dynamic process that relates directly to power relations and behaviour, and its levels can wax and wane within a community. Empowerment is directly related to ownership, and in this sense if sustainable development is to effectively influence the way people pattern their living than it is essential that they actually have the means and knowledge to take part in shaping the main structures and systems that conversely mold the possibilities that they are subject to.

### **1.3 Effective Participation and Citizenship**

Citizenship is encouraged when people have the ability to make decisions over issues that determine the shape of their daily lives. Participation and political engagement brings people face-to-face with the realities of sustainable development. An activity that is critically important because so many of the challenges the proponents of sustainable development are trying to tackle are rooted in daily practices. Citizen involvement also allows an understanding of locality and environment to be reflected upon within the decision-making process. If we want to encourage more reflection on the subtleties of each ecosystem for which policies shape their development, then we need to consider ways to encourage the production of local / indigenous knowledge of these environments. If we want to secure the sustainable health and blossoming of these ecosystems for the foreseeable future, then we need to encourage a sense of stewardship through legal and political empowerment of those individuals and communities that live within them.

An obvious starting point for more participation is through community networks because this is where people regularly interact in direct engagement and dialogue with others. Community networks are also where people build emotive bonds that encourage them to act with care and respect.

‘The most likely avenues for raising citizen participation are indeed those that exist at a sub-national level, for this is where people feel most competent and are most immediately engaged. Anyone who attaches a value to increasing political involvement and participation is directed to democracy at the local level’ (Phillips, 1996: 26).

Participation, in a political sense, is an ideal that each person has the ability to actively engage in the decision-making processes of the governments they are citizens of. In Part Two, the idea that a sense of participation should be extended not just to decision-making but also to areas of planning, implementation and monitoring is discussed, but for now the focus remains on how decision-making processes can best support sustainable community development and it is here that the argument for strong participation is most relevant. Dahl describes five important criteria for democratic processes which provides a sense that participation must extend beyond systems of representation:

- *Effective Participation*- Equal and effective opportunities for people to input their opinions into the decision-making process
- *Voting Equality*- Equal and effective opportunity to vote with all votes counting as equal
- *Enlightened Understanding*- Dissemination of information so each person has the ability to learn about possibilities for policy
- *Control of the Agenda*- Citizens should have the exclusive opportunity to decide what is placed on the agenda for policy discussion
- *Inclusion of Adults*- Universal suffrage with an age minimum (1998: 37-8).

Only the criteria of 'voting equality' and 'inclusion of adults' could be argued as legitimately existing as part of our current political systems. The criteria of 'effective participation' and 'control of agenda' have become very important to recent discussions on democracy. Both of these criteria need to be acquired and improved to recapture a sense of democracy from modern political systems.

#### **1.4 Communities as Heralds of Sustainable Development and Democracy**

Barber proposes self-governing communities engaged in active deliberation as the system that creates 'strong' democracies.

'Under strong democracy, politics is given the power of human promise. For the first time the possibilities of transforming private into public, dependency into interdependency, conflict into cooperation, license into self-legislation, need into love, and bondage into citizenship are placed in a context of participation' (Barber, 1984: 119-20).

Because strong democracy actively empowers individuals to be engaged in

problem solving and decision-making, the concerns for sustainable development become apparent to them. Since strong democracy supports community-led decision-making, a spirit of cooperation is advanced.

This work supports the claims that both sustainable development and democracy require active engagement of the common people in these processes for the potential of them to be fulfilled. Furthermore, it is suggested that it is through community and social processes at the local-level that strong engagement of citizens can be encouraged. Though this chapter has focused on a critical analysis of representational democracy, the real suggestions being made are not about reform to national-level political institutions but towards increasing local-level opportunities to engage with political institutions. In regards to sustainable development, democratic participation of citizens in community networks directly interacting with the development that will occur locally can be an extremely powerful tool for both encouraging an appreciation of sustainable development and helping to increase its success.

‘Sustained and healthy progress towards social, political and economic stability and development can only be made if all members of the community are both able and free to take part and be engaged at all levels and at all times’ (Rihani, 2003: 9). The values promoted by ‘strong’ democracy run contrary to those actually promoted by representational democracy. When an ethos of cooperation replaces one of competition, people find that sharing knowledge and skills is more valuable than hoarding them for exclusiveness. It is beneficial to be surrounded by other people who are also skilled to a high level in community decision-making and understand the needs for sustainable development. People encouraged to participate in decision-making are more likely to reflectively consider their role and responsibilities in the sustainable development process.

‘Strong democracy thus appears better equipped than current systems to set us on a sustainable path to the future. A change of direction seems urgent, or else, as the saying goes, we will end up where we are going’ (Prugh, et.al., 2000: 11). At a local level, the types of decisions that need to be made are not about representatives but rather on specific development activities and policy applications. Deliberation at this level revolves around

the practical steps to be taken to procure the envisioned version of sustainable development. Starting in 2002, the Isle of Gigha began its journey as a community practising direct democracy for sustainable development. The process is still evolving and adapting, but the case it demonstrates for the relevance of community-led decision-making is already convincing. As the people of Gigha participate directly in the decision-making process of their community, they gain skills and insights to improve the functioning of this social process.



## **2.1 The Process**

The legal ownership of the Isle of Gigha is held by the Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust. Section 34 of the *Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003* requires that any community body interested in pursuing the Community Right to Buy must establish a company limited by guarantee to represent the community's interest. In Scotland, all community buy-outs that have occurred to date happened through the process where a company limited by guarantee was established to represent the local community's interest and hold legal ownership of the land. The *Land Reform Act* also requires that the majority of the company's members are members of the community the company represents and that it is these members who have control of decision-making for the company (Scottish Parliament, 5 March 2003: Section 34). The Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust is registered as a not-for-profit organization, thus any profit generated beyond operating costs must be reinvested into further development projects for the island.

Membership of the Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust is limited to permanent residents of the Isle of Gigha who are over eighteen years old. To become a member of the Trust there is a £1 registration fee, and once you are a member you remain so as long as your permanent residence continues to be on the Isle of Gigha. With the process of registration being quite simple, the only family who did not join as members of the Trust did so based on direct objections to the community buy-out.

The establishment of the Trust also required legal definition of how the Trust would interact with and represent the interests of its members. The day-to-day activities of the Trust are managed by a chief executive, previously referred to as the development manager, and a project administrator. The chief executive's main roles are the implementation of projects agreed upon by the Trust and its members, to interface with the governmental and corporate bodies involved in Gigha's development, and to secure the financial and legal support to carry out development work. The

project administrator manages the office of the Trust, interfaces with the local community, coordinates work of Trust employees, and assists the chief executive.

There are three main ways in which the community inputs their opinions into the decision-making process of the Trust. Members meetings are held on a regular basis to discuss and vote upon development issues. Members meetings occur on average of about every month to two months. There is an Annual General Meeting when the accounts of the Trust and its separate commercial companies Gigha Trading Limited and Gigha Renewable Energy Limited are reported back to the members along with the work completed during the year. The members also elect a board of directors of seven individuals from the island to carry out fact-finding, discuss options for development and make suggestions to the members. Board members serve for three years, and elections occur annually for two or three of the positions. An eighth director is nominated by Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Finally, the community members may also serve in a diverse range of working groups on specific issues (eg. Paths and Walkways Network, Gigha Music Festival, Gigha Angling Club, Playing Fields committee, Establishing Indicators of Sustainability, Housing Allocations). Some of these working groups are temporary groups who meet to discuss in-depth the details of a specific issue before presenting their findings and suggestions to a members' meeting for final decision, while other working groups are long-term groups that established to deal with a specific area of interest or project that requires regular attention.

The IGHT's constitution stipulates that all major decisions will be put to a vote of the membership. It is at the chief executive's and the board of directors' consideration to decide what constitutes a major decision. Decisions to be made by the members may be presented in several manners including public meetings, newsletters, consultations, and symposiums. For a decision to be made though, it must be part of the agenda of a members' meeting. The issue to be decided upon is presented and opened to a general debate among the members. Once the issue has been discussed, the chief executive or chairman of the board will call for a vote on a proposed course of action or decision. It takes a majority of voters to pass the motion, and

objections and stand-asides are noted. Seldom will the objections be of large number because a vote will not be called for if there are strong objections or a significant number opposed.

## **2.2 Commentary**

At times, the new form of politics and decision-making on the Isle of Gigha may look like a good example of participation happening from the grass-roots levels, while at other times the history of the feudalistic laird-tenant ownership seems to have created as many mental shackles as physical which remain untested. The real balance on Gigha still lies somewhere in between a bottom-up approach of participatory democracy and a top-down approach of hierarchical politics, though many attempts are being made to make the process more open and receptive to better forms of community participation.

The type of collective participation desired on Gigha is that each person has the potential to participate equally in decision-making in a manner that they can directly influence the development process and the management of the island. It is also held in high regard that the style of development pursued is not only to benefit the present community, but that it will occur in a sustainable manner that will safeguard the island's environment/ecology, culture and heritage, and quality of life for generations to come and for visitors alike. With these as guiding ideals for the style of democratic decision-making that occurs on the Isle of Gigha, it is difficult to critique the agenda of their process. However, by analysing some of the finer points of the process, it is possible to acknowledge areas that are problematic or could be improved upon to further reach the ideal of strong participation in decision-making.

One of the most important cultural factors that is apparent as the Isle of Gigha works for community-led sustainable development is the fact that until March of 2002 when the island was purchased by the community, everyone living on the island could be classified as "vassals" of the laird of Gigha due to the feudal system of landownership that existed in Scotland. Switching from an era where one person owned Gigha and made the decisions about how it was developed for his profit to an era of community

decision-making and a concern for the future generations of the island happened over night, legally, with the purchase of the island by the Trust. However, changes in culture are not always so dynamic, and thus it is still possible to see people outgrowing old practices and beliefs as Gigha's 'New Dawn' really does begin to change individuals' worldviews. In a conversation about the high level of agreement at one meeting, a community member explained to me that even if people disagreed with the findings/suggestions of the board of directors, a majority of individuals would still vote in favor of their decision. To put this in context, he then explained to me that in the past the laird had enough power through both fear and actual control to be able to dictate to people who they would vote for in elections – from the level of local elections to national elections.

A well-used phrase on the island in the run-up to the community buy-out was, 'It is more important to us who the laird is than the prime minister'. The paternalism of the feudal structure of laird-tenant relationships has naturally left behind a desire for an authority voice of direction, or as Fromm (1946) referred to it 'a fear of freedom'. At the first meeting on Gigha where the idea of a community buy-out was discussed, there were only fourteen people who were initially in favour of the buy-out. Most people were undecided because they had no idea of how the community would be able to run the island for themselves since there was no model on Gigha except for that of the laird's rule. Through the process of community ownership, the people of Gigha were able to create a huge *freedom from* the traditional control of the island's development by a laird and the direct, often detrimental effects that had on their lives. Now, the people of Gigha are facing the longer and more difficult journey through uncharted waters to create a *freedom to* feel empowered and confident to practise development in a sustainable manner that will secure a beneficial future for both themselves and the generations to come.

This transition is occurring on Gigha towards a community that is comfortable with and use to actively engaging in an open democratic process of decision-making. The transition is happening slowly and many of the subtle changes may go unseen, but a trend is already noticeable of increasingly empowered and reflective individuals among the community on

Gigha. Many of the struggling points or bumps on the road to becoming an autonomous community can be explained by the lack of knowledge about how this transition occurs and a very limited number of success stories to learn lessons from. Camille Dressler expresses the frustrations they have dealt with on the Isle of Eigg trying to achieve a similar process, 'Although much can be said for learning from experience, there should be easier ways of achieving better representation than trial and error' (internet: 1999).

There are two main areas from the process on Gigha that have been highly important to how well their ideal of direct democracy has functioned. The first area concerns the structure of their decision-making process and how the political system is set up. This is fundamental to how easily and efficiently members can impact on the decisions being taken and have their views represented by the actions of the Trust. The second area concerns how well individuals are empowered to directly participate in the decision making process and how they view their relationship with the development happening on Gigha.

### **2.3 Structures for democracy and decision-making**

The first step in the community buy-out of Gigha was the establishment of the Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust as a not-for-profit company registered by guarantee. The following steps of how to encourage community-led decision-making on Gigha all had to respond to the structure of the Trust. Following the model of a company, the next obvious step was to establish a board of directors. In order to establish how the board and the chief executive would interact with members of the trust, the model of how a company interacts with its shareholders was copied to a large extent. The Trust holds members' meetings where members are informed of the Trust's practices and asked to show approval. An annual general meeting is held to present the accounts of the company and general elections are held to elect board members.

Under this model, the operations of the Trust are the primary responsibility of the chief executive and the board of directors. However, there are limitations to a business-oriented model when it comes to an

attempt at community-led decision-making to create sustainable development and livelihoods. To this end, there are many twists and turns within this framework that encourage further community participation. The constitution of the Trust requires that all major decisions of the Trust are agreed on by its members, thus this requires regular members' meetings at a much higher ratio than standard companies and a high level of communication about the proposed activities and their reasoning.

The Trust office being located on the island and having an open-door policy allows it to have a public face that does not exist in large companies. Since the board of directors and the chief executive are members of the community, it allows people to interact with them regularly, carry out dialogue with them, and voice their opinions or concerns. Decisions that are finalised by a members' meeting are being discussed by many people well before such meeting. Discussions of development regularly occur at social venues such as the pub and the boat house. Individuals regularly consult with board members or the chief executive to get a better understanding of an issue they are not clear on.

One of the most important factors in Gigha's style of development is that there is a cultural tradition of care and support among this island community. Everyone is allowed to voice their opinion during a members' meeting, and a strong objection by a single individual is taken very seriously. Members are likely to try to eliminate a conflict by finding a viable solution for all. To this end, the development of Gigha is strongly about community. People do not want to pursue a specific direction that is believed to support the common/majority good if they recognise that it could have detrimental effects for a single community member.

Even before the buy-out on Gigha was decided upon, the community of Gigha knew that this would require a journey into uncharted territory. The acceptance that sustainable community development would require much learning and discovery has allowed the community to remain flexible and promote an evolving process. The model of decision-making on Gigha has been one of the main areas where an evolving process has been important. Originally, members' meetings were the only significant way members of the Trust could effect decisions being made. The normal style of

presentation was based on the idea that the role of the board of directors was to carry out fact finding and research, thus in most early meetings the board would present the paths they believed were appropriate to the members and then ask for a vote of approval.

This style of decision-making and lack of community participation in the earlier stages of research and fact finding caused serious tensions for many members. Comments were made that the board of directors were making all the decisions and only asking for a rubber stamp of approval. After many meetings where the board of directors would have to go through much of their reasoning and earlier research to justify the conclusions they had come to, it was realised that it is highly important to consult the community throughout the earlier stages and not just once the board had completed their fact finding. This can easily be done by presenting a series of possibilities to the members and asking them which ones do they think could be appropriate to the island's development and should be researched further prior to the board completing significant fact finding.

Another area that was recognised as important was widening the means through which information was shared with the community. The Trust has held a belief that meetings should only be called if a decision needs to be made by the members because there is a fear that people will become 'meetinged out'. A regular newsletter keeps people updated to ongoing Trust initiatives. A non-voting discussion topic can also be linked up with a voting item during a members' meeting. Working groups are commonly used now to investigate specific issues or areas of development, this allows members to take a more direct role in those areas of strong interest or concern. As more means are developed for members to effectively interact with the decision-making process, a growing number of individuals on Gigha seem contented that their desires and concerns are impacting on the decisions taken.

A good example of a new method for interacting with the decision-making process occurred during attempts to agree upon Gigha's masterplan for housing and building development. A large amount of information was generated during a professional consultation about possible locations for development. This in itself would have made it very difficult to use the

original members' meeting presentation style to disseminate all of the information, more importantly it was recognised by members during a preliminary discussion on this approach for the masterplan formation that the debate on this subject could become very heated if individuals began attempting to block specific locations due to sentimental values rather than rational opinions.

The development manager suggested that one possibility would be for each member to spend time with the information and to make individual comments that would then be compiled for presentation. The members discussed this and viewed it as a beneficial approach, thus the information was compiled to explain the purpose of a masterplan, the needs for development, how much development is needed, and the specifics of the potential locations. People were given comment sheets that asked several specific questions for non-housing development locations and a general series of questions for all housing-based development locations. A one-week time period was given to return comments and was extended by a second week at the requests of many members who felt they had not had adequate time to comment.

The development manager then compiled the findings of the members' feedback. Levels of support were ranked for each site. Specific comments about sites were also presented. When the findings were presented, there was a high level of agreement towards which sites should be main sites for development, which should be secondary sites, and which ones should not be developed. Discussion in the members' meeting sorted out a few borderline cases and did change the ranking level of one site. The main benefit of this process was that it allowed each person to fully consider the information at hand, and it carried them through a justification process for their own opinions. Impressively, it also eliminated a possibly difficult situation if open debate occurred without this process of reflective consideration.

Step by step, the decision-making process on Gigha is being adapted to better support community participation. Many of the lessons do occur through trial and error, other refinements are made when the present models are not sufficient for the next step to be undertaken. Because of legal



requirements for community buy-outs, the first institutional structure established as part of this decision-making process was the Trust. From this point, the community worked down the line to establish the tiers through which decisions occur and become action. Since then, there has been a continual tweaking of the process to allow for better participation in the process from the bottom-up. This raises question what would have occurred if they started the opposite way around and built their institutions for decision-making from the bottom-up rather than the top-down.

The goal on Gigha is that each member has the opportunity to a significant level of participation in the decision-making process that is equal to that of all members – based on a majority wins voting structure but also including a high sensitivity to those with minority concerns or objections. Thus, why not work first with the idea of how the whole community will decide things? If community participation is the main goal of how decisions are to be made then it seems very natural to make sure that the first institution you establish is the one that assures this goal. From this point, you can build up the line to establish the more operational functions of how decisions become action. Of course, legally the Trust was the starting point, but the establishment of the Trust did not specifically determine the direction in which this process developed. It only highly influenced it. The main reason that many communities trying to take a more empowered role in their development still default to this type of benign top-down political structure is that there are very few examples of how else it can be done within common knowledge. How does a community of two hundred people sit down together and decide for themselves their future? The democratic institutions and decision-making infrastructures that society perpetuates do not familiarise people with the processes or skills necessary to engage in this type of collective decision-making.

## **2.4 Supporting empowerment and participation**

‘[I]t is rarely possible to generate sustainable changes in human behaviour simply by altering the rules and institutions that govern our lives. The missing ingredient is personal change, which acts as the wellspring of change in all other areas’ (Edwards and Sen, 2000: 609). This is an apparent

lesson from the research of the attempt at sustainable community development on Gigha. The physical structures and institutions have been set in place to allow a community-led sustainable development process, and it is occurring. However, as was already mentioned, the changes that are needed to individuals' worldview are more difficult to facilitate than the specific physical changes that occurred with the community buy-out.

The people of Gigha are now challenged with creating a vision for the future of their island. Their vision is grounded in principles of sustainable development and promotes a healthy environment and livelihoods for generations to come. How does a community use to the command-and-control by a laird make the radical switch to empowered participation? The question of facilitating participation so communities can feel empowered to take direct control over their development is fundamental to the success of sustainability. 'If we want people to have the capacity and will to contribute to civil society, then they have to feel *ownership* of their learning—it has to be meaningful, engaging and participative, rather than functional, passive and prescriptive' (Sterling, 2001: 27).

There has been no specific work done on Gigha to deal with education for participation or community decision-making. However, benefits have come from parts of the planning process for opening awareness to what is possible. The development process on Gigha benefits from the fact that the community on Gigha already encompasses several of the factors that are considered important for participatory democracies. Chris Wright discusses the importance of trust for communities to work for change (2000: 157-8). The people of Gigha strongly value the caring and supportive nature of the community, and it is a community where there is a high level of trust in people. Replying to a comment on how welcome I had been made to feel on the island, one person explained, 'The people here have grown up with an atmosphere of trust rather than suspicion. No one thinks twice about letting their children wander about or leaving their doors unlocked.' This trust is very important because it allows people to recognise that even when they disagree during a decision-making meeting, it is not based on a malign reason. However, the culture leftover from having been under a laird's rule has also made people very sceptical of someone in an authority role

promoting some course of action for the people's good. This includes islanders questioning the intentions of the government in supporting the Trust and the hired employees of the Trust.

Another area that is considered important for communities to function well, but also causes severe contention among academics, is some common sense of purpose. Communitarianism advocate Amitai Etzioni (*The Spirit of Community*, 1993) probably comes under some of the heaviest fire for his claim that communities must share clearly defined moral values (*see Little 2002, chapter 3 for full critique or Gray 1995, chapter 7*). However, less authoritarian calls for shared histories, myths or visions do carry much validity because of their ability to create common, though not homogenous, understanding. Diane Warburton clarifies, 'Community is not a thing, it is a dynamic process in which a shared commitment creates and recreates community through action by people who are aware and committed to the principle of working together for a better life and world' (2000, 18).

Gigha's 'New Dawn' is already a myth in the making, and for the people of the island this is the opportunity to take an active role in the writing of this history – a story that is likely to become an important part of the history of land reform in Scotland. There is recognition by the people of Gigha that they must work together to decide upon the future they desire if they are to complete the type of sustainable development they desire. The Development Plan for Gigha includes a vision of their sustainable development,

Gigha's primary assets are its people and its environment. In seeking to maximise opportunities for today's generation, to regenerate our economy, improve our housing and develop our social infrastructure it is important we do so without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same (IGHT, September 2003: 47).

Though each individual on Gigha will have a different personal vision for the future of Gigha, the development process benefits from a clear aspiration within the community to work towards this general idea of a sustainable future.

A shift in thinking has happened on Gigha in terms of beliefs. One islander described his growing frustrations in the years before the buy-out and his lack of enthusiasm at the prospects for his future. 'I lived half my life

under feudalism and I was not happy with what I was doing. Now I am excited to get up and go to work each day.' People on Gigha do believe in the New Dawn as a major change for the better and feel that their prospects for the future are highly positive, while prior to the buy-out there was a sense of dispossession.

The fundamental change that is occurring on Gigha is directly about freedom to decide one's own destiny and a rejuvenated belief in this possibility. The community buy-out clearly alleviated the bonds that had stopped the *freedom from* having control over one's future, and with this came a sense of empowerment that encouraged the belief in a *freedom to* decide. As discussed, Gigha's community contains many of the factors that support healthy community-led development, however these pertain more to the nature of the community and less to the skills needed to participate in decision-making for sustainable development. Further learning of skills/ methods such as co-operative inquiry and participatory planning could benefit the decision-making process on Gigha. The reflection cycle embodied in action learning would prove beneficial to incorporating the lessons being learned more readily into the institutional structures. On the Isle of Eigg, they found workshops in conflict resolution highly beneficial.

In members' meetings, people will give responses to the specifics of a proposal. Objections will include a justified reason. However, most people do not engage in open deliberation about possibilities or suggest new ideas for proposal. Benjamin Barber suggests that to really fulfill roles of citizenship, people must deliberate, act, share and contribute to be a participating member of community (1984: 155). Through various working groups on Gigha, people are being empowered to deal with the entire spectrum of development activity for single issues: this includes discourse on issues of importance, envisioning possibilities, reflecting on the quality of each possibility, researching realistic methods for implementation, presenting findings to other members, choosing a course of action, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This in itself is a powerful learning cycle for those who participate in a working group, but it requires that individuals involved are engaged in self-inspired reflective learning.

Learning of methods for better participation in the development process is occurring on Gigha, but currently only at an ad hoc level. Considering the importance of an empowered community that is adept at deliberative and reflective discourse, consensus forming, and adaptive / flexible learning for the success of community-led sustainable development, it would seem that further efforts on Gigha to encourage these social assets or the establishment of processes in which these are requirements would prove highly beneficial. It is this *freedom to* that has become so limited in modern society while at the same time we continue to applaud our growths in *freedom from*. Empowering people with *freedom to* not only take control of meaningful decisions that effect their daily lives but to also have the knowledge and skill sets to effectively carryout such a process is one of most important and least solved problems that advocates of sustainable development need to tackle.

### **CHAPTER THREE-** **CONSENSUS BUILDING AND PARTICIPATORY METHODS**

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This chapter discusses processes of decision-making that support strong participation in community-led sustainable development. These processes of decision-making allow groups to carry out reflective discourse and to reach collective agreement on courses of action. The main systems are those of consensus decision-making, action learning and co-operative enquiry. Methods of participatory planning are also beneficial, but will be discussed in detail in Part Two. Though these are not the methods of decision-making readily practiced on Gigha, knowledge of these methods come from both direct and indirect experience with communities actively utilising various models of consensus decision-making, action learning and co-operative enquiry. The purpose is not only to present the value of these individual models, but to suggest ways in which these models can be synthesised to produce the style of bottom-up decision-making that engenders the type of reorientation and learning that is argued for community-led sustainable development to take hold. Furthermore, these models are presented not as strict, blue print systems but as beneficial methods for decision-making that are flexible and readily manageable allowing communities to adapt them to their specific needs and desires. Finally, it is argued that these methods could be used on Gigha to advance the type of participatory decision-making that is desired.

Discourse and deliberation are held by many as a key to the renewal of real democratic possibilities. John Dryzek explains, 'Deliberation as a social process is distinguished from other kinds of communication in that deliberators are amenable to changing their judgements, preferences, and views during the course of their interactions, which involve persuasion rather than coercion, manipulation, or deception' (2000: 1). The ideas of deliberative democracy (Dryzek, 2000 and Goodin, 2003), communitarianism (Etzioni, 1993), and strong democracy (Barber, 1984) have all gained much popularity over the past two decades. These concepts all centre around the idea of active discourse as a fundamental of citizenship, and that as a requirement of "good citizenship" individuals must be willing to openly

engage in political debate. However, many of these theoreticians promote a view that discourse allows people to come to common points of views, beliefs, values, and even issues of morality. Young presents this line of thought, 'Reasonable political engagement ... consists in the willingness to listen to those whom one believes are wrong, to demand reasons from them and to give arguments oneself aimed at persuading them to change their views' (2003: 106-7).

The idea that political engagement should aim at persuading others to adopt your views rather than engaging in discussion to gain an understanding and respect for each others' views is troubling for the fact that it promotes a competitive spirit for such engagement. Several theorists reject the prescriptive normative features of citizenship while still promoting the value of deliberation and discourse. Schauer suggests that the real purpose of deliberation is not about creating specific substantive policies, but that it is beneficial as a decision procedure. Furthermore, he promotes that there are 'no epistemological claims for or about deliberation ... truth is not defined by deliberation' (Schauer, 1999: 19-20).

Discourse and deliberation are primary tools in all forms of community-led decision-making for this is the main pursuit one must engage with to put their own opinions forward and to listen to and consider others' opinions. Considering the goal of deliberation is to improve the means for decision-making so all in a community may feel comfortable with the actions to be taken, it is unnecessary to regularly become entrenched in arguments over the rightness of individuals' moral and belief systems. Inversely, the process of discourse may require individuals to question and reflect on their own belief systems in the attempt to build rational explanations for their opinions, but the discussion on courses of actions to be taken that affect people at a community level does not usually require an entrenched argument over individuals' belief systems. In contrast to Young's statement, reasonable political engagement, in support of community-led decision-making, consists in the willingness to engage with one's community to formulate agreements for courses of action that all members feel comfortable with.

Benjamin Barber argues for strong democracy defined by self-governing citizens and participatory politics, suggesting that discussion is the primary method for this to happen. He argues against present forms of representational politics by suggesting that they are incompatible with real freedom, equality, and social justice. In regards to freedom, he suggests that representation destroys citizenship by compromising autonomy. 'Men and women who are not directly responsible through common deliberation, common decision, and common action for the policies that determine their common lives are not really free at all, however much they enjoy security, private rights, and freedom from interference' (1984: 145-6). In regards to equality, he suggests that real-life equality has to do with social and economic determinants that are omitted from electoral equality. 'In the absence of community, equality is a fiction...' (1984: 146). And in regards to social justice, Barber suggests that representation undermines personal self-sufficiency. '[Representational politics] impairs the community's ability to function as a regulating instrument of justice, and because it precludes evolution of a participating public in which the idea of justice might take root (1984: 146).

### **3.1 Consensus Decision-Making**

Following from Barber's argument for self-governing citizens engaged in participatory politics, the most established process of decision-making that supports the idea of strong democracy is consensus decision-making. Much of the information presented in this section is based on several years of first-hand experience using consensus decision-making in multiple groups and from training groups to use consensus systems. The methods of consensus decision-making are directly designed to allow members of a community to move through a constructive process of discourse to reach agreement on specific courses of action. One of the important features of consensus decision-making is that those who regularly engage in it respect both the desire to retain personal autonomy and the need to interact within a larger community network in order to promote a wider "collective good". 'Consensus is not about the submerging of self in a group; it is an



opportunity to discover one's true self through participation in a process that engages the whole self and ends with an agreement that everyone can own, that has become part of each person's self' (Wright, 2000: 157).

In consensus process, everyone agrees from the start on certain broad principles of unity and purposes for being for the group; but beyond that they also accept as a matter of course that no one is ever going to convert another person completely to their point of view, and probably shouldn't try; and that therefore discussion should focus on concrete questions of action, and coming up with a plan that everyone can live with and no one feels is in fundamental violation of their principles. One could see a parallel here: a series of diverse perspectives, joined together by their shared desire to understand the human condition, and move it in the direction of greater freedom. Rather than be based on the need to prove others' fundamental assumptions wrong, it seeks to find particular projects on which they reinforce each other (Graeber, 2004: 8).

It is important to distinguish between the idea of consensus and the process of consensus decision-making. Consensus is basically defined as agreement among group members. Sometimes referred to as "collective opinion", it is recognised as a convergent decision based on collaboration rather than compromise. Consensus decision-making is considered the process that a group undertakes to reach this type of collaborative agreement, and it can be linked with other decision-making processes of deliberative democracy theories. Because consensus is often misunderstood as a form of homogeneous group thinking, the idea of consensus decision-making is not appropriately recognised as a deliberative process that employs communicative rationality to allow the opinions of individual group members to be reflected on and incorporated into the group's decision-making. Advocates of consensus decision-making suggest that it eliminates the "tyranny of the majority" that is common with voting systems because it allows more expression of minority opinions and concerns. The type of agreements aimed for from consensus decision-making are collaborative solutions that all group members find acceptable or at least do not have significant disagreements with, but they are not homogenising views on belief systems or morality.

Though consensus decision-making is not a common practice for most people or well discussed in academic theories of political decision-making, it is a well-used model that has been adapted to fit the specific needs and context of a wide variety of groups and communities. Groups that regularly

engage in processes of consensus include many intentional communities, the Quakers, the Zapatistas, the Clubhouse mental health communities and many activists' networks including the Global Justice Movement and Peoples Global Action. Consensus is also often paralleled with the style of decision-making that was used in the ancient Greek city-states and that is still used in New England town-hall meetings. Consensus is regularly used for groups of various sizes, but is considered most appropriate for groups between fifteen and two hundred in size though is regularly used for groups around two thousand. The Zapatista network is the largest group employing a form of consensus decision-making for its estimated five-hundred thousand members. A modified form of consensus is used in Porto Alegre, Brazil for its Participatory Budget Process in which its 1.3 million residents partake *(these last two examples will be discussed in more detail in the section, Consensus in wider society)*. Each group or community that employs consensus decision-making will adapt the system to meet their own specific needs and desires. Flexibility of the system is key to consensus decision-making so that the process can readily change with the needs of the current situation even in consideration to how one community uses it.

Most supporters of consensus decision-making suggest this as a form of decision-making that runs contrary to Western forms of representational democracy. The framework of consensus is flexible to adapt to the needs of specific communities, and its process is easily explainable. Thus, communities that value consensus value the importance of each member's participation in the process. In Chiapas, the Zapatistas begin universal suffrage at the age of twelve. There is probably no other form of decision-making processes that has as many regular, free courses teaching the basics of the process, the types of deliberation that occur, and the skills of facilitating the process as there is for consensus decision-making.

### 3.1.1 How consensus decision-making works-

'Consensus is a process for group decision-making. It is a democratic method by which an entire group of people can come to an agreement. The input and ideas of all participants are gathered and synthesized to arrive at a final decision acceptable to all. Through consensus, we are not only working to achieve better solutions, but also to promote the growth of community and trust' (Starhawk, internet: 2002).

The first step in using consensus decision-making within a community is to clearly define the purpose of the consensus process; what is it for and what it is not for. Consensus decision-making is used in groups that are trying to establish collective agreements on actions to be taken, such as development practices. The consensus process attempts to establish agreement on the best course of action for the whole of the community. The use of consensus decision-making does not support debates over entrenched value and belief systems. Individuals in a group may hold a diversity of beliefs but still be able to find common ground to work from. Consensus is not unanimity, nor is it mere compromise. People cooperate together to consider each individual's opinions, ideas and reservations, and from this an attempt to create a synthesis of each person's input can lead to creative solutions. These solutions are quite likely not to be what one individual would choose to do on their own, but is based on what is appropriate for the entirety of the community.

In a consensus process, group members are valued as participants both as contributors and as listeners. The reason for engaging in this process is to reach agreement on action and to alleviate arguments/conflict. During consensus decision-making, each group member is provided with the opportunity to express his or her opinion. It is expected that individuals holding strong opinions will continue to expand their reasoning if needed. Argumentative styles are not considered beneficial for reaching consensus, but at the same time the process is designed to draw out disagreements of opinion. The main points of using consensus are to explore people's opinions, to distinguish potential courses of action, and to discuss individuals' reservations. It is only after this type of deliberation that the group can then begin to create a solution that will work for all members (*see Appendix 1: Some Guidelines for Reaching Consensus for further information*).

As communities use consensus decision-making, their understanding of the process and its various tools and techniques grows. Communities with established histories using consensus function through the process with ease, while groups that are new to it may struggle. As communities become

familiar with consensus, their specific model will adapt to meet their needs. There are many tools and techniques that can aid consensus, as are there multiple ways to frame the way in which specific issues are dealt with. However, several general steps are recognised as part of the consensus process:

- *Introduce Issue or Topic*- Gather and share relevant information so all members share equal knowledge of the issue.
- *Define questions*- Establish the key questions that the group will need to deal with before agreeing a course of action.
- *Discussion*- All members should voice their thoughts, reactions to others' and put forward possible ideas.
- *Make proposal(s)*- Proposal for possible courses of action put forward, attempting to incorporate all viewpoints.
- *Discuss proposal(s)*- What are the positive points of the proposal? What are the drawbacks?
- *Amend or change proposal*- The proposal may become a completely new one. Changes should account for any concerns.
- *Test for consensus*- Ask who agrees with the proposal. Ask who does not agree. What are the major objections? Are there any blocks to the proposal?
- *Once all agree*- There is consensus, the decision may now be implemented

If there are major objections or blocks, there are several options for dealing with them:

- ◆ *Return to Discussion*- What is the reason for the objection? How can this be accounted for in a new proposal?
- ◆ *Issue on hold*- The issue can be left for a reflection period and can be returned to later.
- ◆ *Stand aside*- Objectors can stand aside, stating that they do not agree with the decision but that they accept other people moving ahead with it.
- ◆ *Accept Block*- The block is considered legitimate and no action is to be taken.

The discussion may continue through several rounds and employ a series of techniques before consensus is reached (adapted from Seeds for Change, internet: September 2004).

The ability to block, or vetoing, a decision is considered a powerful right of the consensus process. To block is a statement by an individual that he is in such disagreement with the course of action to be taken that he would no longer be able to participate in the group. Blocks are seldom used to completely halt a proposal because any major objections are usually worked out in earlier discussion, thus the threat of blocking is actually more important than blocking itself. There are two other forms of not agreeing that still allow the proposal to move forward: non-support – to not see the

need for the action, but to go along with it; and standing aside – to not be willing to support the action, but willing to allow other people go ahead with it.

The structure of consensus meetings is also a notable feature. Attempts are made to produce an egalitarian platform where all members are encouraged to participate. Seating is usually in a circle so all people can see one another. There are several roles that people will take on during the meeting; the most important is the role of the facilitator who keeps structure and flow to the meeting. Agendas are established via the consensus process, often including allotted time for the discussion of each issue. All members are welcome to suggest agenda topics, and the group then decides on the priority of topics.

The format given above for the process steps of consensus are based on the normal flow of the process, however there are often reasons to diverge from this standard format. It is possible for an issue to only be introduced at one meeting and a recognition that more information needs to be collected before discussion. Every individual may take on personal responsibility for gathering this information, or a fact-finding commission may be delegated. In other cases where a proposal will need to be extremely in depth, it may be decided to delegate a working group to prepare the proposal based on one meeting's discussion. The proposal can then be disseminated prior to a follow up meeting where the fine points of the proposal can be discussed.

One of the most curious features of many consensus meetings to outsiders is the constant use of hand gesturing by the participants. In order for meetings of larger groups to function with efficiency, groups often use a series of hand signals to make some type of statement without disrupting the discussion. These include signaling to speak and be put in the queue, to respond directly to a question asked, to add a technical point to the discussion, to ask for language translation since consensus is often used among multilingual groups, and to show support for what others are saying. When signaling to speak, you will be slotted into the queue in the order in which you entered; a direct response or a technical point can allow you to jump the queue.

### 3.1.2 Critiques of the consensus decision-making process-

As with any decision-making process, consensus decision-making is not free of problems. The one that is most often cited is the time in which it takes to make decisions. As groups become familiar with the process and the subtleties of forming agreement, consensus on many issues can occur in a relatively short period of time. There are always issues that will raise contention, thus taking a large amount of time to formulate agreement. For those who choose to use consensus, the benefits of each person being satisfied with the decision taken and feeling ownership over the process of decision-making far outweighs the extra time that it may require. The possibility of large groups using consensus is another area highlighted as a drawback, however it is used in large groups regularly and effectively.

The other major area where there may be drawbacks to consensus decision-making is when there are members of the group who do not respect the process. It is possible to manipulate or disrupt the process. Those who are use to roles of power can find consensus difficult and may attempt to claim an authority role by continually speaking while not listening to or respecting others' views. When a person is manipulating the process, the facilitator can take steps to realign the situation. Furthermore, consensus aids in the growth of empowerment and self-confidence among groups, so it is harder to get away with domineering behaviour in a group where egalitarian relationships are desired and methods established for this.

In many cases, the procedure works remarkably well. Those with divergent views generally see that they are taken seriously, and this builds the cohesion of the group. Sometimes a minority view eventually becomes the consensus view: there is no quick vote to overwhelm it. Most encouraging of all, sometimes brilliant new solutions are developed in the efforts to reach consensus (Martin, 1996: internet).

Since consensus decision-making is not a political decision-making process regularly discussed in academic literature, it is also beneficial to review some of the relevant critiques that are applied to theories of deliberative democracy in general. One criticism that is often raised about systems of decision-making that employ group deliberation, especially ones that attempt to reach a collaborative agreement, is the potential for "groupthink". This is concerned with the idea that in order to seek consensus, individual members will purposely avoid stating their

preferences if they perceive that they may be negatively viewed by the group, and if this occurs among a majority of members then substantial decisions are unlikely to form. Furthermore, the social and psychological pressure can influence an individual to avoid opposition and seek conformity of his own opinions with the wider group's. It is suggested that the problem of "groupthink" can lead to a reduction in difference. A second criticism that is relevant here is the idea that deliberative democracy can work to "preserve the status quo". Change in general being the most uncomfortable situation for individuals to deal with, suggestions for actions that lead to transformation are the ones that are considered hardest to agree upon. Thus, it is more likely for consensus to form for avoiding change than it is for establishing a course of transformation.

Deliberative systems of decision-making are often suggested as means for promoting support for ecological outcomes, but a relevant critique is made that, 'To advocate democracy is to advocate procedures, to advocate environmentalism is to advocate substantive outcomes' (Goodin, 1992: 140-1). This argument holds that a decision-making process, whether based on majority voting or deliberative democracy, does not specifically promote certain beliefs or values. Thus, it cannot ensure outcomes that support sustainable development. It will be argued later in this work that through experiential learning the social processes examined in this work promote value learning that does support sustainable development. In regards to consensus, important values of cooperation and collective well-being are learned. However, let us review further why this idea of the disconnection between process and outcomes is more troubling with deliberative decision-making processes that advocate decentralisation and communities as the sole policy makers. This work advocates stronger participation in local-level decision-making but not complete decentralisation. The national government can fundamentally enact ecological policies over a wider population that protects against unsustainable consumption of natural resources at local level than allowing communities to decide separately how local resources will be used.

Dryzek examines a third critique of deliberative forms of decision-making that these processes are influenced more by people who are skilled in

deliberation and can intelligently voice their arguments (2000: 62-7). Some individuals will be better deliberators, thus they are more likely to get people to believe their opinions and recommendations for action. The most worrisome part of this critique is that this problem can lead to an influence of a wealthier class, better educated portion of society since they are more likely to have learned skills of deliberation. However, this critique is based on the idea that consensus requires homogeneous agreement and that people must argue views and opinions to convince others of their own. Not to suggest that there is some real concern in this critique, but this does not acknowledge the cooperative nature of deliberation or the process of consensus decision-making to form collaborative agreements rather than the mere winning of better argued views.

### 3.1.3 Facilitating consensus decision-making-

The consensus process uses facilitators to serve the group during their decision-making.

‘The facilitators are crucial to the success of consensus: they are supposed to test for consensus, encourage less articulate group members to participate, offer suggestions for procedure, summarise views expressed, etc. The ideal is when every group member helps in facilitation, so there is no obvious leader at all’ (Martin, 1996: internet).

The facilitator is a member of the group who is delegated the role for a meeting or a specific agenda item. The role of the facilitator is not to chair the meeting, but to monitor the process and aid its smooth functioning. This includes suggesting methods to proceed, summarising and clarifying the discussion, encouraging the shy to participate and making sure all have chances to speak. In some cases co-facilitators will be used which is especially beneficial when supporting a new facilitator.

By taking on the role of facilitator, it is important to step outside of the role of group participant to avoid creating unequal power dynamics. If an issue on the agenda is one that the facilitator has much to say on, she will pass the facilitation role on to another person. Many groups using consensus decision-making offer specific training on facilitation for anyone wanting to serve in this position. The training teaches how to view the process in a protracted manner while others are engaged in discourse, and it also teaches



several methods for framing the process and moving it forward. These are not difficult lessons to learn, and it proves beneficial to teach facilitation to as many members as possible. Being in the facilitator's role allows an understanding of the process that is not learned in the group participant role. An entire group of trained facilitators practising consensus will move rapidly through the steps to agreement. '[A]s the group becomes experienced, the facilitator plays less of a role — in a very experienced group, facilitation may shift from person to person without anyone being specifically designated' (Schutt, internet: February 2005).

Other roles that are important during meetings include recorders, timekeeper, stacker, vibes-watcher and a coordinator. Recorders take minutes, but they also make sure that any incomplete decisions are brought to attention. The timekeeper pushes people to hold to the agreements they made for the time dedicated to each agenda point. The stacker is used in larger meetings to keep a record of those in queue to speak. The vibes-watcher pays attention to the emotional energy of the group and can intervene in situations of conflict and stress or merely suggest a needed tea break. A coordinator is also used in large meetings to sort out the venue prior to the meeting.

#### 3.1.4 Consensus in wider society-

The basic format for consensus decision-making is ideally suited for small to medium groups. Community groups, such as that of Gigha, could find this process inspiring...providing a model that allows for open-deliberation and equal power relationships in their decision-making. The consensus model may also be adapted to accommodate larger group structures. Large group consensus would work well in the bio-regional models proposed by some ecologists (Desai and Riddlestone, 2002) or within the framework of demarchy — Burnheim's concept (1985) of a political system without bureaucracy that uses 'citizens' juries'.

When consensus is used in larger group structures, it does require that power is delegated by the group to a spokesperson. However, a spokesperson or delegate is different than a representative in that he is both a member of the source group and is limited in power by his responsibilities to

representing the group. If at anytime the group feels it necessary, the spokesperson may be recalled. To fulfill this role properly, the spokesperson has to continually confer with their source group to update them so the group can decide on a clear mandate for their spokesperson. The mandate is the only area that the spokesperson has true legitimacy within operating for the group. To support this process, it is quite common for a group to be represented by a pair of spokespeople.

Even in meetings where all members are present, after a certain size using a spokescouncil process proves more functional. For example, in a meeting of five thousand people they may all be present at the meeting, but only a handful will do the speaking. In a group of this size, there will be a series of smaller groups that are more closely connected. Thus, in a spokescouncil there may be twenty spokespeople, and they represent the interests of their local groups. Before a spokescouncil, the local groups will meet, discuss the topics at hand, and delegate a spokesperson. During a spokescouncil, any member of a local group can speak to their spokesperson directly but not to the entire council.

The Zapatista network of Chiapas, Mexico has created one of the most elaborate consensus decision-making processes allowing its five-hundred thousand members to reach agreement.

‘Over the past ten years, the Zapatistas have deliberately invested their time and energy into cultivating grassroots democracy among indigenous people and broadening their base of support throughout international civil society. Each of the community organizations in the Zapatista-controlled territories is designed with the primary goal of empowering the indigenous population’ (Davidson Schuster, internet: March 2004).

The popular phrase for the delegation of power among the Zapatistas is ‘Lead by Obeying’— that those in positions of representation have authority to act only in accordance with the spoken will of the people they represent. The Zapatista process involves a three-tiered system that begins with universal participation in decision-making at the local level. Each community has delegates in ‘municipal councils’ that are a combination of a few communities. Each community nominates two delegates to serve on the municipal council. The third tier is made up of five ‘Caracoles’, Councils of Good Government. One member of the municipal council serves on the

Caracoles for a two-week period before rotating to the next member. This system benefits the expansion of equality in both directions: first, it supports the autonomy of the communities and their direct input into the decision-making process, and second, it supports a form of socialism that insures all communities are granted fair treatment and opportunities. In Chiapas, the process of *consulta*, to gain consensus throughout the Zapatista network, takes around two months for decisions that will effect across the entirety of the network (Earle and Simonelli, 2005: 260-74). Considering the amount of time legislation at a national level may stall as bi-partisan politics are fought over, two months seems to be a rather efficient pace.

In the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil and over a hundred other Brazilian cities, the Participatory Budget process is employed (since 1989). In Porto Alegre alone, its 1.3 million citizens are able to participate in the development of the city's annual budget expenditure. The city is divided into sixteen administrative regions that hold assemblies. Citywide themes are decided upon to allow an integrated vision. These themes are discussed in the first round of assemblies, including basic components of the budget and the previous year's investments. At neighbourhood meetings, investment priorities are identified. Findings are presented during a second round of assemblies to the city's senior officials. Elected regional and municipal budget councils coordinate the demands to produce the expenditure plan. 'Poorer people in particular find it a more effective way to exercise their rights and responsibilities of citizenship than voting at elections' (Madron and Jopling, 2003: 21-2).

### **3.2 Action Learning and Cooperative Inquiry**

The basis for action research (already discussed in the Introduction) is to create a new methodology that dramatically shifts the role of the researcher towards one that actively and positively supports the community in which one is working. Besides the belief that action research creates deeper and more realistic information through the research process, the other key of pursuing this methodology is to directly participate in the community one is working in to support it. Here, I would like to argue that not only are

the methodologies of action research beneficial for advancing the goals of research, but access to these methods is powerful for communities. This is already promoted by many people working with action research, however it is not well acknowledged for its possibilities beyond its advocates. Several of the understandings and tools that are gained from utilising the methods of action research would advance decision-making in communities if they were incorporated within the processes. In communities working for sustainable development, individuals are already engaged as both researchers/ fact-finders and participants. Action methods can further support this.

The growth in knowledge about social and political challenges that individuals gain through direct participation in decision-making processes is highlighted as an important benefit of these systems.

‘Undeniably one of the most important contributions of participatory action research to empowerment and social change is in fact in the knowledge dimension. Through a more open and democratic process new categories of knowledge, based on local realities, are framed and given voice’ (Gaventa and Cornwall, 2001: 75).

To make this move towards building communities of inquiry, Schon (1987) points out that there must be attempts made to bridge the gap between ‘rigor vs. relevance’ in the social sciences where there is often little interaction between those on the theory/ research side and those on the professional practice side (in Friedman, 2001: 159). Friedman suggests that the four main goals of action science are:

- Creating communities of inquiry within communities of practice
- Building theories in practice (that are context rich and suggest actions)
- Combining interpretation with ‘rigorous’ testing
- Creating alternatives to the status quo and informing change in light of values freely chosen by social actors (2001: 160-3).

From the methods of co-operative learning and participatory action research, there are many valuable tools that can be applied to the way decision-making is carried out in communities. The example of Gigha points to the fact that the difficult place for change is in creating a new culture for liberated community decision-making. Because co-operative learning supports a process of reflective fact-finding, it can provide beneficial methods for investigating unknown factors that are often part of sustainable development. The active-reflective cycle is useful for moving forward with

caution and at the same time closely evaluating the outcomes of development activities. The use of reflective learning cycles also encourages individuals to articulate the specific conditions and details that led to the success of a development action at a certain time.

### **3.3 A Vision for Sustainable Decision-Making**

‘[I]n addition to a fundamental reform of existing democratic structures, new democratic institutions may be needed to bridge the gap between traditional representative democracy and a more participatory politics’ (Christie and Warburton, 2001: 146).

In Chapter One, it is argued that representational politics is not an appropriate method for sustainable development if it is to be led by communities. This is not specifically because representational politics is a bad process of governance, but it is because the process of consigning one’s own power to a higher authority disempowers the chance for active and reflective groups with control over the development of their community’s future. Active citizenship of individuals engaged in thoughtful observation about their direct relationship with the environments around them is an important feature for the potential success of sustainability. This achievement is improbable if people remain alienated from the processes where the main decisions effecting the development of those environments take place. Furthermore, the current system of representation is deeply entrenched in the modern society’s value of competition/ winner-takes-all; this attitude makes sustainability impossible. A sustainable society will be one where cooperation and respect for individual rights and nature’s importance are fundamental to the prevailing culture.

The use of consensus decision-making engenders in people deep understandings of responsibility, self-discipline, respect and cooperation. Similarly, the various methods of action research support the growth of critical attention and reflection. These values are argued as essential for eco-citizenship and encouraging people to actively participate in formulating sustainable development. ‘When citizens think, act and learn together they build the shared competencies and understanding through which effective forms of people-power can be generated’ (Madron and Jopling, 2003: 15).

Several of the methods and tools that can support community decision-making have been identified, but how would the overall structure of decision-making look in sustainable communities and larger society? As was suggested during commentary about Gigha's example, if the main goal of the decision-making process is for an equality of the potential for participation by all community members, the sensible course of action would be to first establish the institutions that will encourage this goal. Once the structure for community-led decision-making is formulated, it is then possible to build from the bottom-up the necessary institutions to allow these decisions to be acted upon. Under this same line of reasoning, in establishing structures to allow sustainable communities to be part of the larger networks of society, it is beneficial to begin with the consideration of how the individual communities make their decisions and carryout actions and then expand to larger networks of multiple communities and wider society.

### 3.3.1 Community Decision-Making: Within the Sustainable Community-

While the type of community-led decision making discussed is framed to promote autonomy and avoid prescriptive behaviours, a few basic agreements by group members are necessary for this type of decision-making to be successful. The argument is that these are fundamental values to a culture of sustainability and thus beneficial for community members to learn, but I acknowledge that this begins to move towards being prescriptive and normative. However, a culture of sustainability would promote values of respect for each individual's right to actively and fully participate in the decision-making process, support education to empower this style of participation, a fundamental awareness of the importance of developing in a manner that does not eliminate the potential for other individuals and future generations to meet their needs, and a sensitivity to the community's relationship as part of the wider ecosystem as its primary support system.

The basic tenets of community-led decision-making for sustainable development could follow those of the consensus decision-making process. In fact, sustainable communities could regularly use a standard consensus process for discussions about issues that fall outside of their development activities. However, it is in regards to the decisions to be made about

development activities where consensus decision-making needs to be adapted or added to in order to deepen its effects (several of these beneficial steps will be discussed in Part Two). An important guiding step for sustainable development is that communities establish clear goals for the type of development they desire and the creation of an ideal vision of the future they are working for. This aids in moving development beyond the abstract by creating a guiding line or direction for activities to be carried out along. By highlighting goals of development, communities also bring to attention areas where development activities are needed.

For each of these development goals, individual working groups (groups for co-operative inquiry) may be established to discuss the importance of these goals and the potential for their realisation. From these discussions, suggestions for courses of action may be made to the larger community for deliberation. The establishment of a development plan will also draw out areas where co-operative inquiry groups can provide further research and fact-finding for the highlighting of possible courses of action. With many issues, such as ecological building and renewable energies, consultation will be required to strengthen the awareness of relevant possibilities. In these cases, the consultants would best serve as a member of the co-operative inquiry groups. This process allows the consultants to provide their “expert” knowledge but to also acknowledge the important determining features of the community they are working with.

Another feature that could adapt the consensus decision-making process to better serve sustainable development would be an expanded role for the vibeswatcher. Since sustainable development currently requires moving into uncharted waters, it is very easy for individuals to be overwhelmed by the speed of changes or lose contact with the reality of the development activities. A regular method to clarify purpose and reflect on the effects of action taken would prove highly beneficial. This could involve a separate reflection group that solely exists to monitor and evaluate the impacts of specific development activities. This group would regularly feedback their findings to the larger community, highlighting both the positive steps made towards reaching their vision and where new problems

or areas of concern have arisen. The establishment of sustainability indicators also serves as a powerful tool for evaluating the longer-term and overall effects of development activities.

Holism is also considered of major importance to the success of sustainable development. Reflection on how various development activities may support or counteract one another is key here. This could be described as reflection on synergy—the importance of keeping energy recycling through the community and the development process while acknowledging the trade-offs between different courses of action. Mapping activities and other visual forms of representation can support this process. If a community regularly meets in one location or has a development office, it is possible to establish a permanent visual record of the development process. This is an activity where children in the community can serve an active and creative role in the development process. One activity that would provide strong amounts of information is the creation of a web of influence where individual development activities and their support of the goals of development are visualised. A quick reference to this web can demonstrate areas where support has been limited and further activity needs to be carried out. It also serves as a technique for reflecting on how activities can be carried out in more holistic manners by acknowledging the activity's potential for creating lines of support to each of the goals.

### **3.3.2 Between Sustainable Communities-**

As communities establish beneficial activities for pursuing sustainable development, there is little reason for each new community to go through the same process of trial-and-error that an earlier community had to go through. Creating effective means to share and disseminate knowledge will support the wider spread of sustainable development. To do this, ways of reporting successful activities, the means by which they occurred and the conditions under which they occurred is required. Creating a internet database of projects and activities would be one method for making this knowledge widely available.



More importantly, full self-sufficiency of communities is not required or even desired to promote sustainability. The modern world is moving towards a “global village”, thus to allow communities to act autonomously while still remaining engaged in the larger social networks requires means for inaugurating beneficial relationships and networking. One model for these types of relationships is expounded under the idea of BioRegional development. ‘Bioregional development is not only about earnest attempts to reduce our ecological footprints and to fit in with the earth’s long-term carrying capacity, but also about creating better relationships between people’ (Desai and Riddlestone, 2002: 11).

For many of the products and services that are not efficient to produce at a local level alone, meeting these needs through a bioregional network is both possible and sustainable. Among the Small Isles of the Hebridean Isles of Scotland, much of their meat supply is met through an inter-island network. One island mainly focuses on the production of eggs and chickens, another on sheep, another on pigs, and a final one on deer. Trading between these islands reduces the transport that would be required to bring the meat from the mainland, provides a market for their produce that would not be available on the mainland due to their limited size of production, and provides security by creating an established market for the individual products. Other products that ideally fit into this type of bioregional trade are those that are value-added products that require extra labor to transform the resource into a usable product. Examples vary from paper, building timber and charcoal from forestry activities; cheese, butter and milk from dairy production; fabric and clothing production from textile crops; and electricity production from areas where renewable energy sources are abundant. By locating the production of the value-added products in the communities where the resources are abundant, livelihood opportunities in the community are strengthened and increased economic potential in trade is secured. By supporting trade through a bioregional network, transport of goods is reduced, secure sources and markets are established, and regional diversity and cultural distinctiveness is strengthened. In regards to services, trades that require a high level of specialisation and may not provide enough employment opportunities in a single community can become viable in a

bioregional network. Examples include computer technicians, maintenance of renewable energy technologies, construction and building trades, and medical professions.

Beyond these applications, there are also many examples where sustainable development activities will require coordination at a regional level. Coordination of regional development plans requires each individual community to have equal participation in the development of this agenda in order to limit disruption of communities' autonomous development activities. The model the Zapatistas have produced provides one strong example of how this can occur. This process will most likely require communities to nominate delegates to serve the community in the generation of a bioregional development plan. However, the process should also secure adequate deliberation in individual communities to secure collaborative agreement on the proposals of this plan.

One way in which this may occur, working with the idea that a bioregion would produce a five year development plan and an annual works/budget agenda, is to begin with a regional council of delegates, with at least two per community that serve in rotation, to discuss areas where bioregional planning is needed to develop a five year development plan. Followed by presentations of findings to local communities so they can discuss how each area impacts on the local community and to form agreement on the course of action they would like to see. This should include a ranking of actions that they would highly support, mildly support and reject and a proposal of how the individual community is willing to support these activities. The findings from these individual communities would then be presented to the regional council where a synthesis of the multiple communities' findings is compiled. From this, a draft development plan can be produced and presented for further deliberation in each community. At this point, it would be beneficial if the entirety of the regional council was present at each community deliberation. Following on from the deliberation of the community councils, the draft plan would be amended to include the findings of these councils. This process would have to continue until each community forms agreement over the plan. If two distinct communities are at either end of an argument or if there is a specific

issue on which regional consensus is difficult to reach , it may prove beneficial to establish a separate co-operative inquiry group of delegates from the various communities to research the issue further. The generation of the annual works/budget agenda would likely follow a similar process but one that is not so elaborate.

### 3.3.3 Within Wider Society-

The decentralisation of power to the local level where individuals can have a participatory role in deciding development towards the future that they desire is the main means for encouraging community-led decision-making for sustainable development. In many ways, this structure calls for an almost complete reversal of the one that currently exists in most modern nation-states. The modern system is one in which the mainstay of power over decision-making is centralised up the way in the system. 'The vast majority of ordinary citizens are still excluded from active participation in governmental decision-making at all levels... There is no room for citizen initiative. The result, inevitably, is a largely passive and disillusioned citizenry' (Madron and Jopling, 2003: 77). This has limiting effects on communities and individuals accepting and understanding the importance of their role in sustainable development.

In contrast to the model of nation-state politics, sustainable decision-making would treat the lower tiers of the system as the best place for decisions to be made that effect the way in which individuals live their daily lives. To support community-led decision-making and individual autonomy, it is also recognised that many of the issues about individuals' behaviours and practices that the state attempts to place control and restrictions on is not only unnecessary but demoralises individuals from acting as powerful advocates for change and sustainability. The current system of politics forcefully works to maintain the status quo when it is becoming increasingly obvious that dramatic change is required to reach a sustainable world.

Though this is a strong critique against the current nation-state model of politics, this is not to deny that there is a continued need for larger social institutions as part of the model of sustainable decision-making. There will

of course need to be some coordination of development activities beyond the bioregional level and the creation of a series of support systems that cover wider society. In regards to development coordination, the model would naturally follow on from its use at a bioregional level with another tier of councils and feedback systems to both bioregional and community councils.

In regards to support systems, there is a large potential for work at the national level. It is logical to believe that under sustainable development, the basic services that are provided by the welfare state will remain in place and in many cases likely be expanded as our sense of what entails basic universal human rights expands. The implementation and maintenance of these services would be guided by wider society while adapted to specific needs both at regional and local levels. An area where there is scope for the expansion of national-level governance is within the realm of facilitating and empowering community-led development (to be discussed in Part Three). The modern nation-state employs large numbers of researchers and professionals to consult on policy. These groups could be modelled into task forces with the main objective being the support and facilitation of community-led sustainable development.

## CHAPTER FOUR- RECLAIMING THE PUBLIC SPHERE

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The previous chapters in Part One discussed various processes of decision-making and how they relate to sustainable community development. Based on the case study of Gigha, it is possible to suggest that it is inappropriate to regard community development as truly sustainable unless the people within that community maintain an integral role with the decision-making process over how development will occur. If people feel alienated from the development process then it is unlikely that they will be supportive of it. They may even become aggressively critical of the process. It is of course not realistic that every decision made in regards to community development will be the ideal of each individual's desires. When individuals feel like they are actively engaged in the decision-making process—that they are able to voice their opinions, that their opinions are respected and valued, that contrary opinions are explained and justified, and that major concerns are addressed—then they are often willing to accept a decision that is made through collective deliberation as the one that is best for the community even if it is not their individually preferred option. The participatory aspect of community-led decision-making, and the resulting learning for establishing healthy and respectful relationships, may be seen as an equally important factor of achievement for sustainable development as is the actual physical development activities that are the “goal” of the decision-making process.

In Chapter One, the main form of decision-making in modern society, the nation-state model of representational democracy is discussed. The main purpose of this chapter was to gain a critical awareness of the current processes of decision-making and to understand the types of behaviours and values this system promotes. Barber considers the nation-state model of representational democracy as ‘thin democracy’, while Prugh, Constanza and Daly label this model as a ‘politics of consignment’. Barber and Prugh et al. are concerned with the fact that nation-state democracy promotes disengagement with the political system. Furthermore, this disengagement with important decision-making processes that effectively shape much of average citizens’ daily lives results in a disconnection from active

responsibility. This is troubling if one considers the arguments made by many proponents of sustainable development that real success will result more from conscientious decisions made by people about the way they live and how that effects the world they live in than will result from technological advances or political/economic programmes. Christie and Warburton support this argument, 'Movement away from unsustainable "business as usual" can only be based on consent, democratically given. So we need a democratic system that promotes rich debate about the state we are in and our long-term options' (2001: 136).

The fact that representational democracy in its modern form is a "weak" form of democracy means that it is unable to cope with and promote the type of changes that are needed for large-scale movement towards sustainability. This critique is not aimed at the current policies that are promoted through nation-state democracies because policies are adaptable and changing regularly under this system. Rather, this critique is directly focused on the lack of engagement that occurs under the nation-state representational model of democracy. Furthermore, this critique is not based as much on the actual functionality of the political systems (i.e. contrasting the efficiency at which they operate), but is focused on trying to understand the importance of political systems, especially the idea of collective decision-making processes, and the effects this has on human learning and behaviour as it relates to sustainable development. A study conducted by Brookings Institution considering five American cities' attempts at promoting forms of direct democracy concluded, 'participation structures place a premium on tolerance in those who participate, and more important, most people who participate over time become more tolerant' (Berry et al. cited in Prugh et al., 2000: 154). Active participation encourages a strong learning process that proves extremely beneficial for sustainable development.

#### **4.1 Concepts of Agency: Liberalism versus Communitarianism**

An important theoretical debate that frames how calls for greater participation, citizenship, and the reclaiming of the public sphere are understood occurs between the proponents of liberal and communitarian theories of social life. The difference between these theories are in the

models of agency they claim in deliberative processes. While liberal, Enlightenment models of society present individuals as the shapers of society, communitarian models present the opposite approach that society shapes individuals. Dryzek explains that liberals believe individuals are unchanged by political participation and remain the best judges of their own interests. Critical theorist and communitarians believe democratic participation does transform individuals and that they gain more values of citizenship through this process (Dryzek, 2000: 21). This complete divide in the conceptualisation of agency has distinct consequences for how theories of deliberation and cooperation are explained and analysed.

The reality, of course, is that no such black-and-white divide exists. Agency and influence between individuals and community / society occur in both directions. Goodin explains, 'The deliberative democratic project is to bring those unconnected individuals together, through the medium of public discussion, to form a more coherent whole. But in this process, it is the individuals who will be forming the whole rather than the other way around' (2003: 45). Social institutions, cultural systems and ideologies are all inherently created by individuals and can equally be reshaped or abandoned entirely by them. However, these social creations, especially ideologies, have a significant influence on defining meaning and legitimising paradigms. For example, it is argued in the previous chapter that representational political systems engender values of competition, while deliberative political systems support cooperative behaviours. The political system educates about the formation of social relationships and on appropriate forms of discourse.

Acknowledging the influence and educational characteristics of various social processes does not require an abandonment of the autonomous agency of individuals. In fact, it is completely legitimate to view an individual's choice to undertake deliberation to formulate collaborative agreements and to work for a collective good as a valid choice of a free agent. Neither is this an act of 'subsum[ing] themselves within a discursive community' as communitarian theorists advocate (Goodin, 2003: 45), nor is it specifically a loss of the individual rational, free will that liberal theorists argue as the starting point for theories of social life. The important fact is that the divide between individual as a free agent and individual as a

constitutive part of a social network is unfounded. The reality is, that though we may see these as two separate roles of the individual, both roles are accomplished by individuals at the same time. As free agents, we rationally seek our own self-interests. As members of a social network, we deliberately seek to define collective good. At times, these two roles may create internal conflict when self-interests and the collective good are seen as competing. However, this is when the processes of self-reflection and collaborative deliberation provide the means for reconciling this conflict both internally and externally.

#### **4.2 Citizenship and Sustainable Development**

The early city-states of Greece held the idea of *paideia*, education into citizenship, as extremely important for the functioning of the democratic process. Murray Bookchin suggests that *paideia* 'expresses a creative integration of the individual into his environment, a balance that demands a critical mind with a wide-ranging sense of duty' and is 'a deeply formative and life-long process whose end result made [the citizen] an asset to the *polis*, to his friends and family, and induced him to live up to the community's highest ethical ideals' (1995: 63). The importance of education for citizenship and the importance of promoting democratic values have been acknowledged in the United Kingdom through recent additions of citizenship education in national curriculums, including the Scottish Parliament labeling 'Values and Citizenship' as one of its five national priorities in education (Scottish Executive, internet: 2000). This type of citizenship education proves quite necessary when the affects of living in a highly individualised society are reviewed. Modern generations have experienced an increase in systems that demand fewer dependent relationships and have in many cases moved towards more independent lifestyles. However, this has coincided with many people experiencing a lessening of meaningful relationships and a disjunction from a strong community base. These trends isolate people from the traditional cultural institutions that promoted the values and behaviours of citizenship.



The concept of *paideia* acknowledged that there was a distinct difference in behaviours for a person in his/her roles as an individual and a citizen, and though these roles exist in the same individual at the same time they represent distinct values and modes of behaviour. *Paideia* taught values that can be referred to as “nobility” and “chivalry” though may be better explained as values/methods for forming healthy relationships and working to build better communities and societies. This provides a categorisation between education that develops the individual’s capacities and skills and education that promotes larger socialising values. This second form of education has often been considered more the work of cultural institutions than the education system, however as people have moved towards more independent lifestyles many of the foundations of these cultural institutions have gradually eroded.

In regards to sustainable development and decision-making, this connects the need for more active engagement in political decision-making with the need to reclaim the public sphere. Eckersley suggests that modern nation-state representational democracies do not facilitate a public sphere for people to actively engage in as citizens. ‘The idea of a common good or generalizable interests falls away and instead we have the highly fragmented will of all, which has no political (or ecological) rationality’ (Eckersley, 2004: 145). Employing Habermas’s analysis of the importance of the public sphere and its modern withering, Eckersley claims that the question of how to reclaim the public sphere should be the most crucial one for critical theorists (2004: 153). A strong public sphere that encourages active engagement and ensures effective participation in decision-making activities provides a very strong platform for citizenship, and in regards to a community focusing on sustainable development this provides a platform for eco-citizenship.

#### **4.3 Conclusion**

The changes that have occurred on the Isle of Gigha since the community buy-out provides an example of a reclamation of the public sphere which demonstrates significant support for the high value of this activity. Gigha’s move to community ownership and active participation in decision-making processes has facilitated the revitalisation of a strong public

sphere. The largest factor promoting this revitalisation is of course the fact that decision-making processes on Gigha now operate in a form that ensures active engagement of the local people in the process. However, there are many other factors that demonstrate the existence of a strong public sphere. Beyond actual engagement with the decision-making process, people on Gigha also participate regularly in a range of activities that help strengthen the community and its social capital. The total hours of community members' participation in working groups would be much greater than the actual hours spent participating in the more formal decision-making process. Furthermore, there is a range of social activities from keep-fit classes to card nights, from Gaelic classes to organising the music festival that are all voluntarily managed and operated by members of the local community. The number and regularity of these events have increased significantly since 2002, and prior to the buy-out the possibilities of interested parties forming a working group to improve a specific area, whether the paths and walkways, the play park, or the fishing loch were limited.

There are two important features that can be drawn out from these examples. First, there is the sense of responsibility that is promoted in such a community that values active participation in the public sphere. This responsibility develops out of recognition that the development of Gigha and its community are truly at the hands of the people. Community development is effectively strengthened through creating this understanding that values the community's members as the foundations of the community's development, thus supporting the ideal of citizenship—that we each have a role to perform as members of a community and of society and that we are the creators of strong social capital. In a community like Gigha's where the development process is concerned with its sustainability, this sense of responsibility also extends to encapsulate an aspect of environmental quality and a consideration of longer timescales that expresses values and behaviour that can be described of as "stewardship". The type of responsibility and role for a citizen that is suggested by the concept of stewardship is quite powerful and is the type of value and behavioural practices that many have suggested is needed for humans to face the challenges that are presented by the ideas of sustainable development.

The concept of *khalifa*, the practice of stewardship for land/nature and family/community, is one that remains strong in Muslim belief systems. *Khalifa* is presented because the concept captures more fully these values and behaviours of stewardship, partially this is related to the mere fact that the concept is much more prevalent in the Arabic language than stewardship is in Anglophone countries. *Khalifa* is also noteworthy for the fact that care for land/nature and family/community are directly interlinked in this concept of stewardship. This is linked to the practice of managing both a *haram*—areas of human living and a *hima*—areas for the conservation and development of natural capital. This is a type of a 'land ethic' that developed from a desert-based culture and interestingly water sources, or an oasis, are protected as part of the haram not the hima.

A second feature that can be drawn from Gigha's reclamation of the public sphere is the feature of capacity building that promotes a sense of self-worth and a spirit of co-operation. Connected to a stewardship sense of responsibility, self-worth and co-operation interact in a feedback loop—as one works with their community and local environment in order to develop more social capital or to pursue sustainability there is an active positive influence on self-worth and while self-worth strengthens the individual develops greater potential for contributing to her role as a citizen or steward. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1954) as refined by Alderfer's ERG categorisation (1972) aids in understanding the worth of this learning cycle. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is simplified into three sections of existence, relatedness, and growth. At the base of the pyramid is existence needs—the physiological needs we must meet for basic human survival such as food, water, shelter and clothing. The middle category of relatedness covers 'belongingness', love, and esteem along with cognitive and aesthetic desires. The upper category is growth, which is concerned with realising one's potential (self-actualisation) and helping others realise their potential (transcendence) (Huitt, internet: 1998). What is referred to as spirit of cooperation can be linked with Maslow's idea of 'belongingness', and the idea of self-worth to esteem. These values that are supported and encouraged through a strong engagement in the public sphere facilitate self-actualisation.

One of my favorite conversations I had on Gigha was someone relating to me this type of experience he had due to the changes that were taking place with the buy-out. Prior to the buy-out, he had begun to feel depressed about his worth mainly because he saw only his employment as providing purpose in his life, but also because he was concerned over the state of his community and frustrated feeling limited in means to improve it. He went on to explain how the 'liberation' the community experienced with the buy-out had really empowered them to take on a collective process of 'self-destiny'. The new-found community desire to work together to develop towards a better future and the strong acknowledgement that their fate was in their own hands are factors that he awarded a significance to for having brought a strong purpose and sense of self-worth to his life. For me, this is an example of the power of the public sphere and the reason its reclamation is integral with the success of sustainable development.

Another example on Gigha that can be viewed as an example of the strengthening of the public sphere is the regularity with which conversations about development activities occur during social gatherings. These types of conversations occurred on most nights that I visited the boat-house or the pub. In most cases they were only a small section of the overall conversations throughout the night, however there were also several cases where some type of development activity was the mainstay of an evenings conversation especially during periods leading up to voting on these issues. I also noted that the general knowledge of a specific development activity increased significantly during these same periods. One example was in regards to different forms of ecological building techniques. With the first new houses being built on the island in thirty years, building of houses was a regular conversation, but it was not until community members were starting to discuss the options for how the Trust owned properties were to be renovated that there seemed to be a rapid increase in awareness of multiple types of green building measures. As with any development decision, the Trust would have provided community members with information about the activities being considered. Establishing an informed population is another effective way to strengthen the public sphere.

The revitalisation of the public sphere on Gigha, and the examples given above, demonstrate a powerful undercurrent of change that is occurring as part of the community ownership process. With this process, there is a visible strengthening of values and modes of behaviour that relate to the ideas of *paideia* and *khalifa*. The relationship that can be drawn between the growth of a sense of citizenship/stewardship and a revitalised public sphere has important implications in regards to understanding the types of cultural institutions that can support a worldview that values sustainability. The rapid reclamation of the public sphere on Gigha also suggests that the link between people feeling actively engaged and able to participate in decision-making processes and a vibrant public sphere is strong.

In Chapter Two, the decision-making institutions on Gigha were explained. One of the difficulties that the people of Gigha experienced was the feeling that the methods for decision-making did not provide enough opportunities for them to actively participate in the process. Over time, the decision-making process was adapted to provide more opportunities for input into the decision-making. However, this appeared to be more than a lone event, rather it appeared that at points community members would make calls for more engagement with the process, that the process would be adapted at some level to meet these calls, for a period this would create harmony and then at some point the cycle would start again. Though it would not be possible to demonstrate a real level of causation, I believe that there is a strong correlation between the revitalisation of the public sphere and the regular calls for better forms of participation on Gigha.

Acknowledging that a vibrant public sphere is an important cultural institution that provides a form of education for citizenship, it is reasonable to expect that people would experience a growth in their desire to participate as a good citizen as they are continually supported through the cycling between practices of co-operation and increases in self-worth. It must be noted that the original structure for decision-making was one that was agreed upon by the community on Gigha, and it was not until this structure had been in place for almost a year that the first strong calls for more methods to actively participate in decision-making were presented. This can

be understood as an conflict between people gaining a sense of duty / responsibility in their roles as citizen / stewards and feeling limited to fully embody such a role without more ability to engage directly with the decision-making process. This continued through multiple rounds because as more opportunities for engagement were provided, people were challenged with greater levels of duty / responsibility. In this case, if the Trust and the board of directors had been inflexible or unwilling to make adaptations to the decision-making process to meet the desires of the community, this cycle and the revitalisation of public sphere would likely have stalled.

The discussion in Chapter Two continued with an explanation of how there is seemingly a disjunction between the strong values for community-led development and active participation on Gigha and the structure that was chosen for the decision-making process. It is important to keep in mind though that the structure that was chosen, a structure that models the relationship between a corporation and its interactions with its shareholders, was one of the few viable models that was readily available to the board of directors when investigating models for decision-making processes. Because community-led sustainable development is not something that is currently happening with regularity, there are few well-established models of decision-making that are really adapted to meet the needs of this goal. The model designed for use on Gigha, the corporation-shareholder model, for example is designed originally with a concern for accountability, not participation.

In Chapter Three, several methods for structuring decision-making processes that better facilitate community-led sustainable development are presented. Though consensus decision-making, action learning and co-operative enquiry are not the methods that are regularly employed on Gigha to structure their community decision-making, it was possible to style these methods into the facilitation I carried out personally while on Gigha, especially as the community built agreement regarding their Goals and Priorities for Development and establishing Sustainability Indicators for evaluating the development process. In regards to the goals and priorities meetings, I carried out informal assessment of several individuals' opinions

of the process. In regards to the working group for the indicators, the group had actively discussed the methods we would use and we finished with a more formal appraisal of our experience in the working group. Both assessments received positive feedback. For the workshop on identifying goals, the feedback also included some sense of confusion during the process that did resolve itself in due course, though much of this confusion was based on the fact that I had asked people to divide up into small groups to carry out one of the activities and this type of small group discussion was not common for a formal meeting. A couple of the people I received assessments from stated that though they were not sure while doing this activity what the purpose was, it made sense once the next activity collated the information generated during the group activity. The strongest comment I received was that since everyone at that meeting had actively participated in generating information it really felt like there was a real community ownership of the goals and priorities that were identified.

The working group for establishing the indicators was modeled around methods of action learning and co-operative inquiry while employing consensus decision-making. Because this working group had several meetings, the learning cycles through this process were quite prominent. During the closing appraisal, those involved in the working group suggested a large amount of amazement at the quality and quantity of tools generated for monitoring and evaluating the development process. In fact, multiple participants suggested that when they first offered to be part of the working group they had reservations about being able to contribute much of worth but were concluding feeling very empowered by the process. The comment that I found the most validating was that the participants felt that the process had clearly demonstrated the value of a co-operative inquiry approach and group deliberation in creating high quality results.

The methods of consensus decision-making, action learning and co-operative inquiry all further the educational and cultural effects that are active in an engaged public sphere. These methods promote a spirit of cooperation that values the strong development of each individual in the group in order to strengthen the overall group, thus connecting with Maslow's growth needs of self-actualisation and transcendence. The

Canadian government carried out a year-long round table process discussing sustainability and consensus concluding that the major challenge for sustainability is not scientific/ technical nor about resource management; rather,

[I]t is about dealing with people and their diverse cultures, interests, visions, priorities, and needs. Unfortunately, the approaches that have been used to manage differences—the courts, the ballot box, and reliance on expertise and authority—are proving insufficient to address the challenge of creating a sustainable society...It is through consensus that the “people” differences can be addressed, understood, and resolved within the context of the best technical and scientific information. And it is through building consensus that we develop a collective commitment to manage scarce resources wisely (Cormick, et.al., 1996: 3).

The consensus decision-making process supports values of cooperation, participation and equality. While discussing the representational model of politics, it was noted that the foundations of modern nation-state representational democracies are from the Enlightenment era. This conversation presented Barber’s idea that current representational models were designed viewing humans at their worst and to establish means to curtail our bad behaviour. In contrast, consensus decision-making can be viewed as being structured around a view of humans at their best and attempting to support our potential. Connected directly with consensus models is a need for active education about how to form good relationships, this is facilitated by methods to increase deliberation, discussion and creating understanding among diverse interests. Furthermore, consensus decision-making encourages active engagement with the decision-making process that places high regard on critical reflection, active listening and well-structured justification for one’s own opinions. This does not mean that consensus decision-making always lives up to its high ideals, but that consensus forming is viewed as a continual learning process that slowly increases participants’ skills in areas such as cooperation, deliberation and critical reflection.

Christie and Warburton suggest, ‘There remains a strong sense in both national and local government that “we know what is best”, and that any increased public involvement must be limited and controlled’ (2001: 146). This is a worrisome scenario because it may be the case that within the government there is a wealth of valuable information and knowledge about



the prospects for sustainable development, however maintaining an exclusive nature towards this knowledge will limit the formation of a culture of sustainability. Since so many of the concerns of sustainability relate directly to people's daily life choices, the need for a strong public sphere where people actively consider these choices is crucial for the success of sustainable development. In turn, governments can play a powerful role in this process by facilitating the growth of informed individuals who are engaged in decision-making processes. By focusing at a local-level and at community-led decision-making, there are many ways to strengthen this overall process and to form cultural institutions that promote values of citizenship and stewardship.

PART TWO

*PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT*

## CHAPTER FIVE- THE PLANNING PROCESS ON GIGHA

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In Part Two, the focus is on how to plan sustainable development. More precisely, the various chapters of this section attempt to build an understanding of the steps communities can take to plan their own sustainable development. The following chapters provide discussions of the various stages of planning in connection to what occurred on Gigha. This chapter provides a detailed account of the types of development plans that were created on Gigha. In Chapter Six, the idea of community participation to establish a vision of the future that is desired is discussed. Monitoring and evaluating sustainable development are discussed in Chapter Seven. In Chapter Eight, the planning process is looked at in full, and the question ‘what makes planning for sustainable development distinct from other forms of planning?’ is considered.

Planning is discussed as a social process that is important for sustainable development because it is through this process that people learn important means for assessing potential development pathways for achieving a “desired” future. Planning techniques support a community in deliberating on what types of improvements they want to work for and forming a collaborative agreement on the type of future they desire. In regards to sustainable development, the planning process engenders a strong understanding of the main principles of sustainable development: a high *environmental quality*: protecting natural heritage, sustainable resource use and continued ability to meet basic needs from natural resources; a high *quality of society*: social justice, support for human rights, and egalitarian potential for strong participation; and a high *quality of life*: happiness, secure livelihoods, and procurement of self-worth. On Gigha, the planning process — including creating a Development Master Plan, a Land Use Plan, and a Design Guide — was a major focus of the work completed by the Trust and its members during the years following the buy-out.

## **5.1 Process**

When the community of Gigha took ownership of their island in 2002, apprehensions were high about how they would make things work. The people of Gigha wanted to pursue development that was sustainable and ensure a bright future for those of Gigha into perpetuity. 'In seeking to maximize opportunities for today's generation, to regenerate our economy, improve our housing and develop our social infrastructure it is important we do so without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same' (IGHT, September 2003: 47). The thirty-year history of disinvestment on the island that the people of Gigha were hoping to change with the buy-out was driven by economic speculation where lairds would purchase the island and then sell it on profiting from increasing land-values, and to this end little capital investment was put into making the infrastructure of the island better. It was obvious that many things on Gigha needed to improve and improve quickly, but the people of Gigha also realised that much attention had to go into creating a plan for the island's sustainable development.

Though sustainable development is the term that best matches the desires for the future of Gigha, few members of the community knew what this would entail. Many of the problems were obvious and clear. The houses on the island had not been invested in for over thirty years. In fact, an initial survey of the housing stock on Gigha found seventy-five percent of the houses to be 'below tolerable' standards. Gigha's economy depends heavily on a limited number of sectors, tourism, agriculture and fishing, all of which are unstable and seasonal; more importantly livelihoods in both farming and fishing were rapidly becoming non-viable. Community wellbeing was also deteriorating as families, especially those with young children, were increasingly moving away from the island. The call for improvement was pressing, but how to begin and take into account the holistic nature of development needed, to support livelihoods and environmental quality at the same time, to create a better today without compromising opportunities for tomorrow. It became clear that one of the first major projects the Trust would have to undertake was the creation of a thorough development plan that took into account the multiple pressing issues and tried to synthesize them into one plan.

The Board of Directors and the Trust began to discuss how to approach creating a development plan and how to ensure adequate community input into this plan. At one point, opinion held that participatory planning workshops should be held on the island for the entire community to be involved in. A 'Planning for Real' style exercise was discussed which would have included three-dimensional modeling of what the future Gigha would look like. However, it was decided that because of the complex needs of the development plan, a planning exercise that only focused on the physical-spatial structure of the island would be inadequate. No other participatory planning exercise was found or carried out that would cover the full range of issues that needed to be dealt with in Gigha's development plan.

Instead, during a members' meeting the main issues for focus were discussed. The director of the Trust and the Board of Directors identified from this discussion six key areas of focus and began gathering information on these subjects. The six areas of the development plan are Freedom from Debt, Housing Strategy, Local Economy, Social Infrastructure, Agriculture and Sustainable Development. Plans for housing, renewable energy and agriculture were prioritised and agreed upon by members prior to the development of a complete master plan so work could begin immediately in these areas.

The complete Development Master Plan for the Isle of Gigha took over a year to finalise and is to cover the next five years of development on the island. The process of creating this plan began as a draft plan with the Board of Directors and the Trust director taking on the leading role in its production. Trust members reviewed the draft and their comments were used to amend the draft to create the final plan. The Trust also received substantial support from advisors from several governmental organisations. The draft of the development plan that the members commented on suggested that a major master planning and consultation exercise would be carried out to involve the community in the overall creation of the development plan. 'Through a series of workshops, planning for real exercises, focus groups and public meetings the members will set the priorities and the targets for the Trust' (IGHT, May 2003: 1). However, it

would be difficult to argue that what occurred was more than a members' discussion of the draft development plan and a vote of approval for it to move forward as the master plan.

Each subject in the development plan is reviewed in detail covering a diverse range of background, possible activities, and areas for attention. Each section concludes by discussing the options preferred to proceed with, pathways forward and lays out a series of targets for development activities to meet. Shortly, each subject area will be discussed individually, however it is important to note here that for each development section there was discussion of many pathways and possibilities for development, more than it would be able to pursue over the five year period of the development plan.

Unfortunately, a precursory look at those items that were not carried forward into action points and development targets acknowledges that some of the more creative and cutting-edge projects that were discussed have been shelved for the time being. This is not the case over all accounts, and it must be brought to point that the level of development activities needed just to bring Gigha to a standard-level starting line and reverse the long history of disinvestment in itself was an onerous task. Due to this, there were several serious pressing development activities that the Trust had to undertake that limited taking on other activities—the largest concerns were with upgrading the housing stock and creating a secure income for the Trust so development activity could be financed through not only this plan but those to come in the future.

The information in the master development plan has been expanded on through a series of other section plans. The farmers on Gigha meet regularly with the Trust to formalise their agricultural policy. Gigha's land use plan is a separate document that approves specific sites for future development, and it was produced by the same architecture firm that was hired to create a sustainable design guide for houses to be built on the island. Gigha Trading Ltd. has produced a separate business plan for the hotel and holiday cottages on the island.

An important factor to note is that though the Trust took the leading role in the production of this development plan, this is a development plan for Isle of Gigha and though it discusses many points with a strong usage of

economic language it is not a Trust business plan. Many of the agenda points in the development plan are activities that the Trust will not carry out or manage itself. The Trust's role is to oversee the entire development to ensure its rigor, quality and sustainability; and in this role the Trust will manage some projects, initiate others and pass them on, and entirely outsource certain aspects. It is not the Trust's role to socialise all aspects of the island's development under its holding, thus communalising all benefits of development. In fact, a major part of the Trust's role is to encourage others—community members, outside investors, governmental bodies, etc—to take an active role in the island's development process.

## **5.2 Key Areas of the Development Plan**

### **5.2.1 Freedom from Debt: How do we repay the £1.15 million owed?-**

To help the community afford the purchase price of the Isle of Gigha, they were given a £1 million loan from the Scottish Land Fund and £150,000 of the sale price was deferred for one year. For many islanders, the real sense of the 'New Dawn' that the community buy-out brought did not take hold until they were free from debt because there was understandable apprehension about how they would deal with a £1,150,000 debt. Nonetheless, on the second year anniversary of the buy-out the £1 million was repaid thus removing the debt that was incurred to make the purchase possible.

The Trust's plan for repayment of this debt included a statement, 'To achieve the debt repayments without compromising the Trust's vision for housing, economic regeneration, social infrastructure, agriculture and the environment' (IGHT, September 2003: 2). Two main options were identified for generating the capital to make payment on the Trust's debts. The first option was for further island-based fundraising and public donations with a goal set of achieving a total of £200,000. Extensive fundraising activities were carried out prior to the buy-out by islanders to generate money for the purchase, and since these methods were already set in place it made sense to continue them. The second option, and the mainstay of debt repayment, was

to sell assets of the Trust to third parties. The majority of sales were for land for building development, but the single largest sale was that of Achamore House, the laird's house which sits in the renowned gardens of Gigha.

To support island-based fundraising, a Fundraising Committee was established. Most of the fundraising activities carried out were standard to charity-based fundraising: a sponsored row, ceilidhs, pub quizzes, and the sale of Gigha items including tartan products and a limited-edition whiskey. Public donations still occurred after the success of the buy-out but not to the level they had occurred at prior to the buy-out, and in the case of Gigha there was never a large primary donor like the £1 million donor who supported the community buy-out of the Isle of Eigg.

There are two noteworthy fundraising activities carried out on Gigha. First, a Friends of Gigha group was established that sought subscription of interested parties, costing between £20 for an individual and £50 for a corporation annually. As a member of the Friends group, people receive monthly news updates and a quarterly newsletter. Friends of Gigha also receive discounts on specific island products and at island-based activities. Both the Eigg Trust and the Knoydart Foundation established Friends groups that each reached around three hundred members. With this as a guideline, Gigha hopes for five hundred members in its Friends group over the five-year period of the development plan. A Friends group proves successful for a limited range of fundraising, but probably is more worthwhile as a method to establish long-term connections with visitors. The second fundraising activity was the establishment of an annual folk music festival on Gigha. The first music festival was held in September of 2003, and each following year has been more successful and supported by a growing attendance. Some musicians and attendees return each year to the music festival due to its quality and their enjoyment of it. A cultural event like a music festival is a nice way for communities to attract large numbers of visitors and bring vibrancy to an aspect of traditional culture. Though neither of these fundraising activities generate a huge capital annually, they both create opportunities for long-term support of the Isle of Gigha.

In regards to sales of assets, it was recognised that this would be the major way in which the Trust would repay its debts. However, care had to



be taken to assure that these sales would not jeopardise future development potential. Some land was released for sale for the construction of private homes, and land was also sold to Argyll and Islands Enterprise for the construction of three craft units and Fyne Homes Housing Association for new affordable homes. The sale of several buildings was discussed, though only one actually occurred. This was the sale of the laird's house Achamore which caused contention among islanders. Views on the importance of the house being held communally were debated, and it was made clear that the sale of the house on the open market would likely bring someone to Gigha who was much wealthier than the average person already living on the island. It was clear that there was a lot of sentiment attached to this house and especially the surrounding gardens. One community member said, 'Nothing good has ever come out of that house for the people of the island, so why would we want to hold on to it?'

After a valuation of the house, the Trust acknowledged that the operating costs for the house were beyond the means of the Trust. This made the alternative idea of the Trust running an exclusive hotel from this house financially impossible. Also it was clear that the sale of the house would contribute to well over half of repaying the loans. It was decided to limitedly advertise the house on the open market. To the islanders' excitement, they were informed that there was interest in the house not as a private home but as a location for the new headquarters of a successful business. The idea was accepted, and Achamore house has since become the headquarters for a business that deals in flower essences and has provided new employment for a handful of people from the local community.

#### ***5.2.2 Housing Strategy: Warm, dry affordable housing for all-***

As already noted, housing was a priority area for development work. At the time of buy-out there were sixty-seven residential properties on Gigha. No new homes had been built in thirty-four years, and few improvements occurred on most of the properties over that same time period. A house conditions survey found seventy-five percent of the houses to be 'below tolerable standards' and another twenty-three percent to be 'in serious disrepair'. Of the sixty-seven houses on the island, the Trust took

ownership of forty-eight of them. A housing needs survey was carried out that found there were a large number of hidden homes, or multiple households under one roof. Chairman of the Board Willie McSporran was quoted in the Scotsman newspaper, 'For years we lived with declining standards in housing. After buying the island it was our priority to address the intolerable housing conditions and liberate the community from fuel poverty. Improving housing on Gigha is central to the sustainability of the island' (Ross, 16 March 2005).

'The Trust is faced not only with improving the housing stock per se but also the challenge of meeting the aspiration of many to home ownership whilst ensuring good quality affordable housing is available to all' (IGHT, September 2003: 8). A wide range of background was discussed in considering possibilities for housing development. Much of this background covers the wider aspects of housing in Scotland including the growing aspiration for home ownership and the resulting lack of affordable housing as a key factor in rural depopulation. With this in mind, a vision for the housing strategy on Gigha was created with the goal being warm, dry and affordable homes for all under a range of tenure choices so existing and future island residents will be able to meet their housing needs and preferences.

Early on, the members agreed that there would be a no-sales policy for the existing housing stock that would be reviewed after three years, though sale of several building plots for new houses was also agreed. Work to establish an extensive improvement programme for the existing housing stock and the issuing of assured tenancies were prioritised to begin before the completion of the full housing strategy. Four factors were considered important for reaching the housing vision: improving all houses to a good standard, provision of new homes, ensuring a long-term stock of affordable rental properties, and a diversification of tenure possibilities.

5.2.2.1 Housing Improvements: In the summer and autumn of 2004, work on the first new private homes on Gigha and a six year improvement plan for the existing housing stock on the island began. The plans for repairs to the existing housing stock take on an innovative approach improving

houses to a higher ecological standard than most new homes are currently being built to. The improvements to the houses are to bring them to a thirty year standard and to take energy efficiency to such a high standard that any increases in rental costs due to the repairs budget would be offset by decreases in energy costs. Another important aspect to both housing improvements and new building is a strong importance to remain within the nature of appearance to houses on Gigha while providing modern homes.

The House Conditions Survey suggested a cost of £2.91 million to carry out the needed improvements. The Trust received several grants to support the improvement programme due to its innovative approach. Argyll and Bute Council conditionally approved Housing Improvement Grants for all Trust properties and then increased the amount to be given per house well beyond the standard generally allowed for under that system. Further grants were also approved including grants awarded specifically for the planned energy efficiency improvements. These grant systems cover about two thirds of the housing improvement cost, but it must be noted that this amount would have been significantly lower if Gigha's improvement plans had not been considered extremely innovative and to a high ecological standard.

Over a six-year period all Trust-owned properties are to be improved along these lines. For houses that were considered below tolerable standards, the work that must be done is extensive. During their improvement, residents will be transferred to another property. In one case, a building with significant heritage and structural beauty was deemed not strong enough to support the planned improvement, but instead of replacing this traditional building entirely new load-bearing walls will be built within the current stone walls. The Trust is also making significant effort to support current homeowners on Gigha to carry out similar improvements if desired. This is done through providing appropriate knowledge of possible sources of financial support and allowing private home owners an opportunity to buy into the improvement scheme being carried out by the Trust.

5.2.2.2 Retention of Stock vs. Stock Transfer: One of the major issues debated in this section of the development plan is the differing options of retaining ownership of the housing stock by the Trust or transferring it to a third party such as a housing association. These two options are discussed with the connection to the improvement programme and the possibilities for receiving grants. The main reason stock transfer was considered is because a housing association would have wider access to improvement grants. At the same time, this would release a major asset base from Trust control that would both effect income levels for the Trust and control over the shape of future development in this area. The community members of Gigha expressed a preferred desire to rent from the Trust, and it was also deemed that this was a more sensible solution. Following talks with government bodies that assured that the financial capital to initiate an improvement programme would be made available, retaining the housing stock in Trust ownership became not only the preferred option but also a viable one.

5.2.2.3 Securing Tenancies and Rationalisation of Rents: Prior to the buy-out on Gigha, the situation of tenancies and rents were under the control of the whim of the laird and his factor. This led to a situation of a highly random series of leases. Rents for similar properties could differ at a ratio of one to three, and tenancy agreements were made with all sorts of clauses and controls placed within them. In cases where housing was connected to employment, the laird held the feudal right to evict tenants if there were problems with their employment.

The Trust undertook the goal of creating secure tenancies for all their properties and leveling rents to a fair price. To undertake this, the Trust required a legal firm to draft a new standard for tenancy agreements. This is an interesting fact because there was no standard tenancy in existence in Scotland that reflected the type of relationship the Trust wanted to have with the community it was established to represent. The new tenancy agreements removed past restrictions on residents from operating businesses such as B&Bs from their homes and secured pathways for the inheritance of leases by a wider range of family members than normally allowed.

5.2.2.4 Gigha Construction Company: Forming a community owned construction company to carry out the six-year housing improvement plan on Gigha was an idea that was well supported but unfortunately proved not possible at present. There were several reasons that supported having an island based construction company. The proposed work amounted to enough to provide five full-time jobs over a six-year period with several employees receiving new training and qualifications. A Trust-run construction company would also allow for profits to be reincorporated into further development projects, thus greatly reducing the Trust's expenditure during the improvement programme.

Though this option was highly desired, the setup of the company did not prove feasible or financially viable. There would have been an initial output cost for the establishment of a construction company which the Trust did not have to invest. Furthermore, because many of the skills needed by employees of said company did not exist on the island, there was a difficulty in having island-only employees. Employment opportunities could be advertised off the island to attract newcomers, but somewhat ironically due to the need to provide newcomers a house and the lack of housing stock at that time it would not be possible to provide a place to live to those people employed building and improving houses. However, the Trust was able to form relationships with two regionally based construction firms that have proved quite beneficial. The opportunities for several years worth of work was highly appealing to these companies, and in response they offered very competitive bids for the projects. Furthermore, an agreement was worked out that each firm would take on one or two employees from the island community who receive work-training and thus will potentially be able to provide the labor force for repair projects in the future.

#### 5.2.3 Local Economy: A strategy for jobs and business-

The language of the economic strategy focuses on livelihood opportunities and the realisation of individual potential as key priorities. This is not a plan for generating mass amounts of wealth but rather a plan to create a stable and buoyant local economy that will provide secure and sustainable livelihoods for the island's residents.

SL [sustainable livelihoods] thinking centres on the objectives, scope and priorities for development from the perspective of poor people. This “way of thinking” requires a commitment to probe beyond technical issues, beyond the superficial political and institutional issues, to develop a realistic understanding of the livelihoods of poor people and how these can be improved (Carney, 2003: 13).

Carney, speaking of the SL approach as promoted by DFID, does refer much more directly to ideas of poverty than Gigha’s development plan does, nonetheless the concept of promoting development in order to increase the quality of livelihoods and decrease marginality rather than economic growth is very similar. The strategy also suggests that economic developments must be ‘in keeping with the unique island environment, culture and heritage’ (IGHT, September 2003: 17).

Gigha’s local economy, as many rural local economies throughout Scotland, has deteriorated over recent history. Traditional livelihoods in agriculture and fishing are proving viable for fewer and fewer people. Fifty-years ago, Gigha had thirteen operational farms that each employed three to four people. Today, Gigha has four operational farms that employ only one or two people each. Traditional fishing was highly replaced by fish farming, and then in 2004 the fish farms on Gigha closed. The growing tourism industry has become a leading employment sector, however it is seasonal with employment opportunities dropping by a fifth through the winter. So in developing Gigha’s local economy, community members are not concerned about being wealthy as much as in having peace-of-mind that they will be able to support their needs and their family’s needs into the foreseeable future.

Though it is not the Trust’s role to secure all efforts for development of the economy, it can play a leading role in planning regeneration and facilitating new opportunities. In this strategy the Trust identifies five main areas that can contribute to economic regeneration: agricultural restructuring, housing improvement and development, tourism and hospitality development, renewable energy generation, and development of added value and niche market products. The first two areas have been given separate subject areas in the development plan, but the following three will be discussed below. The Trust also outlines a series of guiding principles to direct the nature of economic development (*see Table One at the end of this*

*subject area*). It is acknowledged that with Gigha's small population and isolated location, the real success for the economy will be through generating uniqueness and high quality in its economic activities rather than competing among the general market.

5.2.3.1 Tourism and Hospitality Development: In regards to tourism, there are three identified areas for development opportunities. First, the Trust desires to establish a better marketing strategy for the island that was supported by the completion of a tourist survey. Second, the level and quality of accommodation is to be improved on the island. New accommodation is being considered over a range of provision levels from self-catering cottages and timber chalets to a bunkhouse and camping facilities, while improvements to existing accommodation will be aimed at increasing their star ratings. These first two areas are explored further in a marketing strategy and a business plan completed by Gigha Trading Ltd. Third, there are many ideas presented for improving the quality of experience people have on the island. These include massive improvements to Achamore Gardens, a formalised paths and walkways network with printed literature, and an interpretative heritage centre.

5.2.3.2 Renewable Energy Generation: One of Gigha's most publicised projects is the construction of three wind turbines on the island. This project proves highly beneficial in many ways: it was possible to receive grants to construct the turbines, a substantial income is being created for the Trust through the secure sale of electricity to the grid via the renewable trading credits scheme, and it provides a noteworthy focus in the sustainable image they are trying to create. In earlier discussions on renewable energy, two following stages were pondered. The second stage would establish a combined heat and power plant burning a locally grown biomass and possibly support a district-heating scheme. The third stage would involve the Trust taking over the power lines on the island and becoming the electric supplier. This would create a strong synergy with any profit from electric sales returning back to customers in the form of further development improvements. However, these two later stages were not formalized in the master development plan, though it must be noted that the renewable credit

scheme will be in operation for the next ten years so these further ideas for renewable energy best fit into a subsequent development plan.

5.2.3.3 Development of Added Value and Niche Market Products: The Trust envisages a strategy that will see Gigha's products marketed as unique and high quality products, in this fashion Gigha's 'sustainable' image and its marketable products will go hand-in-hand. Currently, most products produced on Gigha leave the island in the raw form, thus it is proposed value-added products would both increase income and support expanded employment opportunities. Examples include reestablishing an island creamery to utilise the dairy production and creating a smokehouse that could process various local seafood. At this time, the Trust itself would not undertake these ventures, but is pursuing outside investors whom they are more than willing to facilitate the implementation of these projects. Niche market tourism packages exist with special artists' retreats that take benefit of the off-peak season for increasing visitor numbers, and many islanders have been very interested to see a micro-brewery established on the island producing Gigha beer. The first two new businesses to the island, the flower essence company and the tablet/fudge company, both fit within this strategy.

5.2.3.4 Gigha Plc., A unique vehicle for investment and development: The creation of a public limited company, Gigha Plc. has been reviewed as a means to secure future investment for development projects. For this to work, it requires the company to be limited by shares that could be purchased by public investors. These investors would basically be investing in a proposed development project and receiving profit from that project in return. This idea was spurred by a similar plc. venture that was established for the Centre of Alternative Technology in Wales. The Trust would also make investments in the company through the sale of island assets required for development projects in trade for shares in the company, and community members' shares would be classed differently to allow them to maintain sole voting rights in the company. One example for a proposed project is investment in the development of a series of holiday cottages. The members approved the idea of a plc., however it has yet to be established.



<b>Table One: Guiding Principles to be applied by the Trust to all Economic Developments</b>
<i>- text from Gigha Development Plan, September 2003: 18-9.</i>
<b>Branding</b> The Trust seeks to develop a brand identity for the products and services offered encapsulating the qualities of the island and associating these qualities, in the mind of the consumer, with the product or service offered.
<b>Control</b> As far as possible the Trust should seek to maintain control over the broader economic regeneration of the island and appropriate levels of control over assets sold or leased.
<b>Value Added</b> Where possible any product or service offered should incorporate and retain the benefit on the island of the maximum added value.
<b>Niche and Premium Markets</b> Where possible the Trust should seek to identify and service niche and premium market opportunities.
<b>Diversity</b> Diversity is strength. Since markets change over time, sometimes slowly sometimes rapidly, an over-reliance on one product, service or sector would make the island's economy vulnerable.
<b>Synergy</b> In each case the Trust will consider any proposed development both on its own merits and in terms of its wider impact on the Trust's overall vision for the islands regeneration. Developments that have the greatest overall value will be prioritised.
<b>Substitution of Imports</b> The Trust will consider the potential for displacing imported goods and services with island based goods and services where this is considered to be in the interests of the island and where there exists a good business case.

#### 5.2.4 Social Infrastructure: Ensuring the essentials for community wellbeing-

It is recognised in the development plan the importance of a strong social infrastructure to support the needs of community members and contribute to their well-being. The discussion of social infrastructure revolves around the needs of the community and how to secure their fulfillment. Primary responsibility for much of this social infrastructure is held by the government, and in this case one of the most effective efforts the Trust can make is in reversing the trend of depopulation on the island. A vibrant population will secure continued services by providing a demand and cost-effectiveness for their supply. A growing population would justify meeting more demands on-island rather than supplying them as off-island services. The vision is for, 'A social infrastructure meeting the needs of individuals, providing the essentials for community wellbeing and contributing directly to the quality of life of all island residents' (IGHT, September 2003: 33).

Beyond issues of population which is an issue that hopefully will be addressed generally by high quality sustainable development, the Trust has identified four requirements for social infrastructure that are currently unmet needs. One, the creation of a children's play park was proposed for development. To this end, a Play Park Committee was established, the children were consulted and plans were made with Fyne Homes to develop the play park as part of their new housing construction. Two, further sporting and recreational facilities are considered alongside improvement of the existing golf course and playing field. Possibilities include establishing a Gigha Angling Club to pursue funding for the development of a fishing loch, construction of tennis courts, and potential for a gym and/or swimming pool. The pool could also be used as a heat sink if a combined heat and power project is pursued. Three, as noted under the Tourism and Hospitality heading of the previous subject area, the provision of a cultural heritage centre would not only provide benefit to the tourism industry but would also benefit community well-being by supporting the island's rich cultural heritage. Four, a need for sheltered and supported housing for elderly residents is acknowledged with some houses developed as part of Fyne Home's project.

#### **5.2.5 Agriculture: A sustainable strategy for farming-**

Agriculture has played an important role on Gigha throughout its history. The fertility of the soil on Gigha is exceptional, and the island was once able to produce enough potatoes to feed not only its own population but also those on the neighbouring islands of Islay and Jura. The shape of Gigha's landscape is dominated by its centuries of agricultural management. In wider historical context, Gigha's agricultural history is similar to many other areas of Scotland. The clearances effectively removed family crofting as a dominant means for survival, farms have steadily been focused towards intensive and concentrated production, the number of livelihoods supported from agriculture have drastically decreased, and market fluctuations have made a secure income unstable.

Gigha's current agriculture practices are dominated by dairy production. Daily milk collections on the island take it to the Cambeltown

Creamery where it is made into cheese. At the time of buy-out three farms were operational, since then a fourth farm has been brought online. Prior to the buy-out, the community Steering Group had an options report for agricultural restructuring developed by the Scottish Agricultural College. Following from this, the Trust recognised potential for agricultural development in both dairy farming and in crofting. The development plan states the vision for agricultural development as creating, 'A vibrant and sustainable agricultural sector contributing significantly to the regeneration of the island economy and ensuring the continued balance of land use that maintains the beauty of the landscape and the broad biodiversity and abundance of species' (IGHT, September 2003: 39).

In regards to farming, the Trust is limited by several external factors in how agriculture is developed but can support agriculture practices by promoting an agrarian economy that is stable and working at its highest potential. There are two major limiting factors to the sustainable development of farming on the island. First, the farms are susceptible to macro economic fluctuations in agriculture. Second, the farms are subject to a milk quota that requires the existing farms to produce all near full capacity, thus limiting the possibilities for diversification activities. In fact, the Trust had to undergo a series of negotiations with First Milk, the buyer for the milk, to continue daily collection by guaranteeing a significant rise in milk production over the period of agricultural restructuring.

Thus the main discussions for farm improvements all centre on increasing milk production. Here, several options are being addressed that should prove beneficial. Under laird-tenant relationships, much of the grazing land on the island was held by the laird and seasonally rented to the farms. The Trust has formalised long-term leases with the farmers that expand their boundaries to encompass enough grazing land to be self-containing. In this fashion, the farmers have more ability to plan for the future, carryout better land management, and invest in their farms more wisely. Limited Duration Leases have been established that allow a twenty-five year tenure for all lands necessary to a farm's activities. Beyond dairy, the development plan does discuss options for meat production and creation

of value-added products from the dairy, but as noted the current goal of reaching the required milk quota limits other opportunities.

Crofts, a type of agricultural smallholding, may provide greater potential for diversifying agriculture on Gigha. Prior to the buy-out, there were only two registered crofts on the island but neither was operated as a croft. Since the buy-out, one croft is actively being worked again. Historically however on Gigha, as on most of the islands, crofting was very extensive. The proposed 'Modern Gigha Crofts' may see a resurgence of crofting on the island. Gigha Crofts would be built in townships of four to six houses as bare land crofts with common land located in the vicinity, and the crofts would actually be registered as small holdings with 'like economic status' to crofts. The croft lands could be managed to grow either produce for sale within the local community or products to meet niche market demands. Furthermore, people with skills desired on Gigha could use the croft as the means for establishing a small business. This is how a joiner was attracted to Colonsay.

#### ***5.2.6 Sustainable Development: Protecting and enhancing the physical environment-***

The subject area on sustainable development begins with the statement 'Gigha's primary assets are its people and its environment' (IGHT, September 2003: 47). The development plan continues by acknowledging that too often economic development occurs at the expense and deterioration of the social and environmental quality of an area. The idea that current development projects must not take away from long-term potential on the island and opportunities for future generations is also acknowledged. To the people of Gigha, an island where many families' have lived on the island for multiple generations, the idea of inter-generational equity is quite sensible. 'In this way the Trust vision is for the sustainable development of the island maximising the long term social, economic and environmental benefits for today, tomorrow and in perpetuity' (IGHT, September 2003: 47).

A discussion of the need to be both proactive and reactive in planning for sustainable development follows in the development plan. In regards to a proactive strategy, the Trust suggests the need for the principles of

sustainable development to be applied throughout the development plan. All the development projects the Trust undertakes should stand as exemplars which is demonstrated through the models it has established for housing improvements and for renewable energy. In regards to a reactive strategy, the Trust establishes its importance in reviewing any external development proposals to make sure they are in fitting with the vision for Gigha and suggests the creation of guides for potential development.

The largest section of this subject area is concerned with land use planning. Due to the community ownership of Gigha and the work of the Trust, Argyll and Bute council has allowed creation of a local structure plan to mainly be directed by the participation of the islanders. To these ends, an extensive land use plan has been created for Gigha as the 'physical interpretation' of the development plan (*see following discussion on the land use plan*). This plan is also furthered by an island design guide that details principles of design and construction that new houses must adhere to. The main purpose of this is to assure the visual amenity of the island and to make sure that new development is in fitting with the nature of structures on the island.

The importance of establishing methods for monitoring and evaluating development is also considered. Two key actions are noted. First, sustainability criteria are to be established to provide a means for new development proposals to be judged and their merits considered. This would establish a way to assess each project and consider if it is in fitting with the overall vision for Gigha and the desire for sustainable development. Second, sustainability indicators are accepted as a method for long-term monitoring and evaluation of development. Indicators will allow performance and progress of development activities to be judged over time, and will hopefully also provide a check that can bring recognition to problems before they are significant.

#### **5.2.7 Land Use Plan (Master Plan)-**

An architectural firm was contracted by the Trust to provide consultation on the creation of both a Land Use Plan and the Island Design Guide. The Land Use Plan details the areas where future building

development can take place. Most of these building plots are for new homes, but there is also a location specified for commercial use that could include a builders' yard, a smokehouse, and a cold store. With a desire to increase the population to two hundred over the next ten years, the main building that will occur is for the provision of new houses thus this is sensibly the focus of the plan. In an interesting note, the idea for new building sites is to form clusters of houses that will follow a pattern similar to traditional farm steadings. In this way, a visual image will be created in keeping with what already exists on the island and avoid a linear model of development that sees all new houses built along the main road. There was a major concern about the visual impact of extensive development and the idea that if a linear model was followed in ten years all you would see from the ferry when coming to Gigha would be a massive line of houses. There are other benefits to the cluster model in regards to infrastructure efficiency and the creation of neighbourhood spaces with a central courtyard being the focal point for each cluster development.

#### **5.2.8 Housing Allocations-**

The need to assure that available houses are allocated to appropriate people was addressed through the establishment of a housing allocations plan. Gigha's model followed that created for Berwickshire Housing Association in 2001. Gigha's system was developed in partnership with Homehunt® who also provided support to BHA. This system involves a series of gold, silver and bronze priority passes that registers a person's 'need for housing' and allows the Trust to grant leases to those with the highest priority. Gigha's priorities are for housing allocation to existing island residents, returning island residents and those moving to the island to live and work. Also set in place are methods to ensure that the best use of houses will be made, thus checks are used to assure that the number of bedrooms match those needed and houses designed to meet access issues are used by those needing such. The hope of this system is to create, 'a fair, transparent and easily understood system of allocating houses, whenever they become available' (Homehunt®, 2005: 3).

### **5.3 Commentary**

I must start this commentary by acknowledging one of my initial biases that I held when first working with Gigha's development process. I held a desire to see Gigha take on an innovative and ground-breaking pathway to sustainable development. This led me to be frustrated at times with what I saw as a conservative approach by the Trust to the development process. However, as I began to understand better the subtleties of Gigha's development process it became clear that my bias towards pushing boundaries was quite misguided in regards to what was appropriate for the community of Gigha. While my thoughts were often about how to move into uncharted waters with creative and imaginative projects for sustainable development, many of the people of Gigha were concerned whether they would be able to manage the level of risk they had already taken on through community ownership.

Once I began to understand this, the approach of the development plan appeared very well founded. The first stages of the development plan are about creating security and stability for the people of Gigha. As has already been noted, many of these projects are about directly reversing the history of disinvestment on the island. More than that, it is about creating a rich and vibrant infrastructure that will meet the islanders' basic needs at a very high level; the upgrade of housing to a thirty-year standard is one strong example. Another important aspect of the early stages of the development process is to ensure that development would continue into the future. This requires a continual revenue that the Trust can apply for further development projects, and to this ends the building of three wind turbines on the island will provide a substantial part of this revenue.

Many development projects on Gigha are designed for solvency. The development projects led by the Trust are judged and designed with a high consideration towards their potential solvency, thus replacing the more common concern for profit. Both the idea of solvency and profit are considered in economic terms and the generation of income, however as a not-for-profit venture the Trust recognises that income generated becomes

energy-capacity for further development. In this way, examples like high-quality rented accommodation with profits stored in a repairs fund becomes a self-perpetuating cycle for high-quality rented accommodation.

The idea of establishing a robust and secure infrastructure on the island is of course a very sensible goal for development. Not doing so would be negligent of the needs of sustainable development. There is still potential for development on Gigha that aims for innovative projects and opens up to higher-risk ventures, but these risk only become acceptable when a secure infrastructure has been established to afford for the potential failure of such a project. The plans for the agricultural sector provide a good example. There is a recognition that diversified agriculture would be less vulnerable to the fluctuations of the price of milk than the current focus almost entirely on dairy production, but as noted all farms must produce at full capacity to meet the annual quota to ensure the continual collection by the milk tanker. Working towards a point where diversification is possible while still maintaining the milk tanker, a fourth farm has been brought online and all farms have been given full lease over their needed acreage rather than seasonal grazing leases. The goal of this is for each of the original three farms to actually produce less milk and the fourth farm to cover the remaining need. As this occurs, rather than the farms suffering from a smaller level of milk production, they gain a heightened security through the potential for non-dairy related farming activities.

In this style of building a secure infrastructure, sustainable development becomes a slow but steady process. Future years may only see the need for one or two new projects, but they can be done in a manner that adds to the robustness of the growing infrastructure. The discussion of possible power opportunities, first the wind turbines, second consideration of combined heat and power, and third Trust control of the power supply to the island demonstrates the idea of developing in stages starting with the most secure project and moving to the most innovative. Stages two and three may not prove viable, but the model of considering the gradual upgrade of the infrastructure meeting both short-term needs and goals while working towards long-term goals is a good example of sustainable development in progress.



### 5.3.1 Principles for Sustainable Development-

It was noted in the discussion of the Sustainable Development section of Gigha's development plan that as part of their proactive strategy for planning sustainable development the Trust should ensure that the 'principles of sustainable development' are applied throughout all development activities. However, within the development plan there is no detailing or consideration of what these principles of sustainable development are. Though proponents of sustainable development have suggested many definitions for what sustainable development is and have attempted to clarify what are the differences between development that is 'sustainable' and 'unsustainable', there is really only an agreement of what sustainable development consists of at a very thematic and precursory level. It is accepted that sustainable development will be holistic development, but there is a debate over what this actually means and what sectors/systems need to be part of this development. It is also usually accepted that sustainable development requires a recognition of inter-generational equity—that development in the present should not limit the potential of future generations to carryout similar types of development, but the aspect of intra-generational equity and wider social justice seems less acknowledged in practice.

When considering the process of designing sustainable development, there is less clarity about what this actually entails. To be more precise, there has been very little discussion about what are the differences between planning sustainable development and 'unsustainable' development. At first glance, there is actually little that seems in conflict between the way a sustainable development plan is formed and other 'unsustainable' plans. The biggest surface difference is usually the more holistic nature of a sustainable development plan – basically a wider breath of focus. I would suggest though that there are two other important differences that prove more fundamental. First, planning sustainable development not only incorporates a more holistic discussion of topics, but it also uses a more holistic process of planning which is best seen in the preliminary stage of Envisioning the Future and the concluding stage of Monitoring and

Evaluation *(to be discussed respectively in the following two chapters)*.

Second, as suggested in the development plan, plans for sustainable development will embody several principles that encourage their sustainability.

What are these principles of sustainable development that guide the planning of a sustainable development process? Moreover, how should they be applied in the planning process and how do they ensure that the development planned will be sustainable? The International Institute for Sustainable Development maintains a database of sustainable development principles that include a wide range of focuses from business practices to agriculture to more general principles of sustainability that have been defined by various groups in civil society, government, business sector and international NGOs (IISD, internet: 2006). A quick glance through such a database demonstrates that though there is a level of thematic unification between different lists of principles there is also a wide variation among the actual defined principles of sustainable development. In Table Two, a list of principles of sustainable development that are identified as being embodied in Gigha's development plans is provided. Because this list is based on the principles that seemingly provided guidance on Gigha, it is quite probable that this list will have omitted other valuable principles. Nonetheless, it is being provided with the hope of initiating a discussion about what type of principles of design aid in ensuring sustainability in development planning.

**Table Two: Design Principles for Planning Sustainable Development**

**Synergy and Solvency** Traditional models of economic development view a closed system with multiple inflows and outflows (or externalities). Sustainable development models try to acknowledge an open system and recognise each factor as an internal and integral part of the development process. In this sense, the development model changes from one that is linear to one that is cyclical. Thus, development can be designed to produce synergy and solvency within these cycles. Synergy – the energy produced and embodied in the development activities – is not treated as an externality, but rather motivating constant movement through the development cycle and a source of continually strengthening it. Designing for solvency – ensuring the development cycle will continually produce enough energy (or money) to renew its own cycle – provides a method to maintain a lasting development process.

**Diversification** Ecology values biodiversity because it is understood that a diverse ecosystem is more resilient and healthier. This value has worked its way into models of ecological economics and social development for much the same reason. Development based on the strengthening of only one factor is unlikely to provide lasting benefits, while development activities that are diverse provide many possibilities and potential for subsequent development activities while reducing the vulnerability of the overall system.

<p><b>Appropriate Design</b> This is similar to the idea of appropriate technology. Projects and activities must be designed in a way that fits with the local situation and environment. This is most relevant to the physical impacts of development, but it also relates closely to idea of conservation and the strengthening of assets such as natural and cultural heritage.</p>
<p><b>Security and Infrastructure</b> Development activities should be designed to strengthen the overall security of local systems, especially focusing on the resiliency of social and economic networks. Projects that though providing change could lead to destabilisation of local systems are to be avoided; this also acknowledges that some projects with beneficial outcomes may not be appropriate given existing circumstances and opinions of local people. Small but continual improvement and strengthening of the local infrastructure is one strong way to encourage increasing security. Viewing infrastructure as the social systems that people depend on, this approach is concerned with producing more opportunities for people.</p>
<p><b>Precautionary Principle</b> This is a very common idea in ecological ethics and states that if the consequences of an action are unknown than it is necessary to proceed with caution but only after insuring that the likelihood of negative consequences is low. Furthermore, this extends the idea that when working with unknown factors, it is best to proceed at small scales until the effects can be assessed.</p>
<p><b>Livelihoods</b> A livelihoods focus in development work can be contrasted with an economic “growth” focus. The concept of livelihoods is concerned with providing the ability for people to securely meet their and their family’s needs, while an “growth” focus is more concerned with the number of jobs and total salary level that a project will produce. The biggest difference between the two is actually in the time-scales they employ with livelihoods being more concerned about the long-term, secure meeting of needs. As a principle of design, this can expand beyond mere employment and focus on other means in which people meet their needs; it also presents a focus on long-term security rather than short-term growth.</p>
<p><b>Networking</b> The concept of networking is most often applied to human/ social relationships as a means for strengthening the overall ability of a given institution or group. In terms of sustainable development, the idea of networking extends beyond social relationships and begins to consider how all systems and institutions that are part of a community’s development interrelate. This principle suggests that effort should be made to link various aspects/sectors of development and understand their influence on one another. An example is understanding how agricultural practices influence the quality of the natural heritage and how activities in both sectors can benefit one another; the quality of the natural heritage can than be understood as influencing aspects of both community well-being and the tourism industry.</p>
<p><b>Exemplar Projects</b> This point is more specific to Trust initiated projects than the overall development plan. As the figurative leader of the development process on Gigha, the Trust stated that the projects they initiate should serve as exemplars of the type of sustainable development that is being pursued on the island. The idea of having some exemplar projects that really signify the sustainable approach of development work is important for both their inspirational aspects and the ability of the community to herald such projects as benchmarks of achievement.</p>

There are other values of sustainable development that are apparent in the type of development that is planned for Gigha, but these can be seen as the more general themes of sustainability than actual design principles to apply during the production of a plan. Furthermore, these basic themes of sustainable development, similar to the noted 'three pillars' of social,

environmental and economic, may be viewed as the overarching ethics of sustainability. The idea of stewardship of both the natural and cultural heritage on Gigha is fundamental to the type of development planned. Community participation in the development process is desired and actively promoted. Development planning is concerned about the legacy it will leave for future generations on the island. Finally, there is also an embracing of the notion that Euston and William term 'sufficiency of sustenance': 'Sustainability requires a new standard of enough for all without excess and wastefulness' (1995: 5-7). These themes do guide the type of development being pursued on Gigha but provide less structural guidance in the way plans for sustainable development are created.

### 5.3.2 Implementing Development-

After the formulation of a development plan, the next step is the actual implementation of projects and development work. Depending on the depth of coverage in the development plan, it may or may not be necessary to produce specific project agendas for individual works. A development plan often only highlights proposed and accepted possibilities, however sometimes it does detail the stages of each individual project and in these cases can serve as specific project agendas. There are a handful of points that are important to cover in a work/project agenda: the basic goal of the project, the stages and activities the project will cover, providing necessary resources and proper management, and a works schedule. Coverage of these points supports the clear and successful implementation of a specific project.

There are certain tools provided by sustainable development methodologies that aid in ensuring the sustainability of project implementation, but to large extent this stage of development differs little whether the type of development activity is sustainable or not, or whether it is community-led or not. Impact assessment, both environmental (EIA) and social (SIA), can be employed during the production of project agendas in an attempt to mitigate against any potential adverse impacts of the development project. However, in regards to community-led development projects, the professional requirements of such assessments can prove inconvenient and costly. Furthermore, many of the factors that are

addressed during these assessments are also dealt with during the production of the larger development plan, thus such assessments are really more valuable for standalone projects.

On Gigha, projects have been implemented across a diverse range of options. Some projects such as the housing refurbishment and the wind turbines require professional support for their management and implementation. However, many projects on Gigha are under local control and management. Working groups for the play park, paths and walkways, and angling have all developed their own project agendas and are undertaking much of the work directly themselves. If there is potential for projects to be managed by local people, this proves a very beneficial course of action that allows people to acknowledge their individual self-worth within the development process by providing them with meaningful and active roles they can fulfill in working towards the desired future. Though at the beginning of a specific project, individuals may not feel confident enough to undertake a leading role in its management, for many types of projects that do not require an extensive technological expertise a working group of local people show a high level of ability in creating and managing them. Working groups that have a background in forms of consensus decision-making, action research and co-operative learning are usually well equipped to take on projects that require some level of learning/knowledge gathering before implementing them.

## **CHAPTER SIX-** **FORMING COMMON GROUND AND ENVISIONING THE FUTURE**

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This chapter focuses on the process of envisioning the future as a preliminary stage of planning sustainable development. For community-led sustainable development to strongly take hold then it is important for members of a community to form collaborative agreement on the future they desire. A good envisioning process will bring light to a plethora of possibilities, promote creative thinking, encourage people to expand their ideas beyond what they commonly think is possible, and talk about the future under an ideal scenario. From this work, people are able to collectively identify issues that are pertinent to developing towards their desired future and establish goals and priorities for development. ‘The notion of “envisioning” – enabling lay people, along with technicians and policy makers to anticipate environmental change and thereby contribute to its management – is inherently appealing but very difficult to realise’ (Selman, 1996: 77).

Selman suggests a view that envisioning is a method to contribute to the management of development. However, in this work envisioning is being discussed as a preliminary stage in the planning process. Envisioning is about orientating community vision and establishing common goals for development. A vision with goals and priorities for development sets parameters and a direction for the rest of the planning process. Selman also suggests, ‘[M]ethods and techniques for local sustainability must embrace those which are primarily concerned with creating visions, resolving conflicts and building consensus’ (1996: 77). In the wider context of the expansion of sustainable development, this preliminary stage encourages direct examination of the type of future that is desired and concepts about social progress towards this future. Thus, in this work it is argued that envisioning the future is an important social process for aligning people with the goals and values of sustainable development.

This preliminary stage in the development process is important in community-led development because of the need for community members to work from a common ground and understanding on the purpose of

development. It is possible to distinguish three main phases of the stage of envisioning the future. First, there is need to assess what the current situation is and the environment in which development will occur. This phase aids the forming of a common ground / understanding that community members may acknowledge as their collective starting point. Second, envisioning of the future necessitates discussion of what people desire for their future and their community's future. During this phase, discussion about the future may open into a discussion of an ideal scenario which helps to recognise a wide range of possibilities and potential for courses of action. Third, the final phase is the process of clearly defining the community's goals and priorities for the development process they are undertaking. In this phase, there is need to filter the ideal scenario of the future with the aid of the assessment of the current situation and to acknowledge how realistically to move towards structural planning for development. The establishment of a community's goals and priorities for development provides a strong common ground and helps create a collaborative agreement on what is desired from the development process and for the future of their community and local environment.

In this work, I am discussing the idea of 'Forming Common Ground and Envisioning the Future' as one main stage of a community-led sustainable development process. However, it is equally legitimate to consider what above are noted as distinct phases within this stage (1. Assessing the Current Situation, 2. Creating Vision, and 3. Defining Development Goals and Priorities) as each individual stages. One aspect that is interesting to note about all three of these phases is that none of them are about creating a structured plan for development work, rather they all promote a theoretical understanding of what type of development is desired. This is why they are discussed as one main preliminary stage of the development process. As a whole, the main purpose of this stage is to form a collective understanding among a community or group of stake-holders engaging in a development process as to what they are attempting to achieve through their development work and to clarify what the various members of the group view as within and without the remit of the development process. Acknowledging that in most cases individuals are willing to work for some

level of collective development but also desire to maintain some level of personal autonomy that is not subject to community-led development, an important aspect of this preliminary stage is to distinguish the trade-offs between activities for which collaborative agreement will be formed and those which individuals wish to maintain personal agency over.

### **6.1 Assessing the Current Situation**

Since the evolution of strong participatory practices in the development field, practitioners have developed numerous methods for completing assessments and appraisals of the present situation and environment in which development work is to occur. In fact, the majority of participatory methods that are promoted as ‘methods for participatory planning’ are used for assessing the current state of affairs, while there are substantially fewer worthwhile methods for the later two phases of this development stage. Robert Chambers identifies the five major sources of Participatory Rural/Rapid Appraisal (PRA methods) as: Participatory Action Research, Agro Ecosystem Analysis, Applied Anthropology, Farming Systems Research, and Rapid Rural Appraisal (2003: 10-11).

There are two distinct types of benefits that are apparent from carrying out appraisals and assessments as an early phase of community-led sustainable development. First, the more direct benefit of carrying out such an assessment is the establishment of a knowledge basis that provides a strong understanding of what the community’s assets and needs are – the establishment of a firm “starting point”. A good assessment will provide a holistic background of the community’s current factors that influence the development process and facilitate a discussion that acknowledges both those factors that will support development and those that will hinder it. Second, the assessment phase can aid in forming a significant level of accord among the various members of a community if the assessment can lead to collaborative agreement over what the “starting point” is. Participatory methods of appraisal that are used to acquire local/indigenous knowledge and facilitate co-operative interpretation of this knowledge aids in reaching agreement over such a “starting point”.



Pretty and Hine suggest, 'History tells us that coercion does not work. We may have technologies and practices that are productive and sustainable, but if they are imposed on people, they do not work in the long term. These processes and technologies must be locally-grounded, and so produce different solutions for different places' (December 1999: 4). Pretty and Hine's quote demonstrates a recognition of the two above benefits in their idea of being 'locally-grounded'. For development work to be locally-grounded, it must both fit into the specific environment in which development is being designed for and it must have support from the local people. Participatory forms of assessment facilitate the development of an ethos of cooperation and support local empowerment. Because this phase focuses on the present and to a lesser extent the past, the process of forming a collective agreement at this point usually proves easier than it does in forming agreement on development decisions for the future; thus it is quite useful to start with strong participation during this phase if there is a hope that it will carry through later phases and development stages.

#### 6.1.1 Participatory Appraisal Methods-

The theoretical discussion of participatory methods, including their benefits and drawbacks, occurred in Chapter One, thus in this section there will only be a discussion of the variety of participatory appraisal methods that are available. Facilitators in participatory planning will use a toolbox of numerous methods. There is no one method that proves most beneficial, and methods used are catered to the specific project. 'The basic underlying principle of these tools and approaches is that participation leads to a better analysis because it involves the different perspectives of all those who experience an issue. It also gives those at the receiving end of decisions the opportunity to influence those decisions' (Oxfam GB, internet: October 2004).

Pretty and Hine recognise four core principles that unite most participatory methodologies. One, *Systemic and Group-Learning*, elaborate understanding of local conditions is revealed through group inquiry and interaction. Two, *Multiple Perspectives of Stakeholders*, diversity of background and opinion among participants strengthens the process. Three, *Facilitation Leads to Transformation*, the process aims towards active

transforming of situations in ways that people regard as real improvements. Four, *Learning Leads to Sustained Action*, the learning process leads to debate about change and discussion of specific actions to implement defined changes (December 1999: 8). It is the case that many projects that claim to be “participatory” do not acknowledge these principles, however most participatory methodologies are designed to support these principles with the hope that not only will these methods generate beneficial information but that the process of their use will promote learning and empowerment among their users.

Kumar divides the methods of PRA into three categories based on the specific aspect addressed as space-related, time-related and relationship models (Kumar, 2002: 39-40). Spatial methods explore the physical aspects of people’s locale, but they attempt to go beyond this by providing an understanding of how people relate to their environment. These include social mapping and resource mapping that focus on the physical aspects of the local area and also include mobility mapping and service/opportunity mapping that focus on how people perceive and relate to their spatial environment. Time-related methods explore various temporal dimensions of individuals’ and a community’s reality. These explore many dimensions of time including past events and recent history—such as time lines and historical transects, seasonal changes and trends—such as seasonal diagrams and trend analysis, daily life with a daily activity schedule, and future aspirations with a dream map. Relational methods are used to explore the connection between various items or different aspects of the same item. These methods cover many types of relevant relationships including those involving different factors in the development process—such as cause effect diagrams and pair-wise ranking, both individual and collective relationships with social systems—such as Venn diagrams and network diagrams, relationships with economic systems—such as livelihood analysis and well-being rankings, and aspects influencing the success of a project—such as force field analysis and spider diagrams.

There are a handful of participatory methods that have developed into more elaborate systems of assessment and can be distinguished from the more general participatory appraisal methods for their stand-alone usage.

Livelihood Analysis has grown into an extensive system of assessment that now includes its own specific methodology, though its evolution is from the early PRA livelihoods analysis method and the gaining importance of sustainable livelihood models. It is supported by several international development agencies including DFID, FAO and Oxfam. 'Conceptually, livelihoods connote the activities, entitlements and assets by which people make a living. In particular, the asset dimension is critical to an appreciation of the concept' (Wanmali, 1999: 4). These assets include those that are natural/biological, social, economic, political, human, and physical. Though Livelihoods Analysis also considers problems being faced and areas for potential improvement, the identifying and supporting of local assets is very similar to the methodology of Asset-Based Community Development (developed by McKnight and Kretzmann, 1996). There are two significant ideas that are promoted by this framework. First, that development activities should utilise local assets as the primary building blocks for the process. Second, when working at the local level many of the strongest assets are part of the associational sector, in contrast to the institutional sector, where citizens come together in face-to-face relationships and are motivated into action due to care rather than pay (McKnight, 29 May 2003: 1-5).

Planning for Real and other forms of 3D Modeling have generated enough support and usage that it is appropriate to recognise that these are being used as their own methodology for assessment and planning. Planning for Real was developed by Tony Gibson and the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation with the first trial run in Glasgow in 1977. The main focus of Planning for Real and other forms of 3D Modeling is a three-dimensional model of the locale that development is being discussed for. The discussion occurs around this model and is concerned with how this physical space should change over time. 'The model provides a common reference point around which to structure inputs, and allows a broader perspective of issues as well as providing a physical base for placing suggestions' (Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation, internet: 1999). Though Planning for Real provides a beneficial physical model for discussion of development, it could be seen as only linking to the spatial-model category of the three categories of PRA methods thus sole dependence

on this one method would provide a less holistic envisioning stage. However, 3D modeling in general demonstrates the benefits gained from using methods of assessment that have a strong visual component. Visual methods of participation allow for a wide variety of communication and aid in creating more detailed discussions. Visual methods often aid in the reduction of conflict in discussions because it provides a focus for thought that is physical and can be actively worked with.

In general, participatory appraisal methods demonstrate a strong respect for Indigenous Knowledge Systems. In many cases, participatory methodologies go beyond a mere attempt at extracting indigenous knowledge and actually work to strengthen local processes of appraisal and planning. The transformative learning effects of participatory appraisal methods can be viewed as one of its strongest benefits to the overall process of community-led sustainable development. It is possible to complete a detailed appraisal of the current situation in a locale where development is to occur led by professionals and consultants with or without consulting local people and to accomplish the first goal of the assessment phase: the establishment of a knowledge basis that provides a strong understanding of what the community's assets and needs are. However, appraisal methods that do not embrace participation are very unlikely to support building a 'common ground' and forming agreement about the type of development desired throughout the community.

The discussion of several well-known participatory methodologies demonstrates the types of transformative learning a community or group of people experience while interacting through such a process. The focus on local assets as building blocks for development discussed in reference to Livelihoods Analysis and Asset-Based Community Development, especially the importance of the associational sector, demonstrates a means for building on hope rather than despair. This action helps to strengthen the associational sector and local assets by providing them meaningful worth as building blocks for the development process. This represents a movement away from *coping* strategies towards *adaptive* strategies of development. Three-Dimensional Modeling methods, including Planning for Real, demonstrate the depth at which local people can participate in the development process

when attempts are made to provide methods that prove readily accessible for 'non-professional' usage. Furthermore, the use of physical models also demonstrate the benefits of attempting to move development discussions toward actual practices and strategies to act upon and away from theoretical debates about types of development. If one of the main goals of participatory planning methods is to promote *adaptive* strategies of development that work as much to strengthen the local asset-base as to solve specific problems, then it is these effects of transformative learning that prove extremely significant from the use of participatory appraisal methods.

#### 6.1.2 Assessment on Gigha-

The assessment that took place on Gigha was not extensively based on these types of participatory methods. The idea of completing a Planning for Real appraisal on Gigha was originally favored, but later it was decided that the methodology's strong focus on land-based planning did not fit with the holistic nature of development that was desired on Gigha. However, when it was decided that Planning for Real would not provide the type of participatory appraisal that was desired, no alternative participatory methods were sought.

As part of debating whether a community buy-out was something beneficial for the people of the Isle of Gigha, several assessment studies were carried out by professional consultants: Overall Island Feasibility, Agriculture, Housing Options, Legal and Agricultural Leases. Furthermore, as specific projects were considered, the board of the directors discussed and assessed the prospects of such projects in relation to the present situation on Gigha. However, there was never a specific stage that could be labeled a definitive assessment stage to Gigha's planning process. What did occur was limited in scope and often ad hoc. Though community members had a chance to vote on what was described in the development plan which includes some assessment of the current situation, there was never a real chance to participate in the aspects of assessing the current situation. Because much of the assessment that did occur was by professional consultants, this may be seen as an off-island, professional defining of the common 'starting point' for the development process.

The decision to undergo a community buy-out on Gigha provided the community with a level of 'common ground' as the development process began. With the agreement to take collective ownership of the island, there formed in the majority of the island's population the approach that they are undertaking this process as a community and that their individual fates are directly intertwined with the fate of the overall island and its community. This provided the type of 'common ground' that is an important goal of the envisioning development stage, however this did not lead to a similar strong cultivation of a sense of a collective 'starting point'.

## **6.2 Creating Vision**

The second phase of the envisioning stage of sustainable development planning is concerned with creating a vision of the future that is desired. This phase is more about opening discussion to acknowledge a wide variety of possibilities for what the future could entail than it is about actually detailing what type of development should occur. In a community-led development process, this discussion helps to ascertain individuals' hopes and dreams for the future along with their fears and anxieties. The main goal of this phase is for the individual members to reach a collaborative agreement on what they believe would be real achievements in the development process and what would provide a greater sense of fulfillment.

While discussing a vision for the future, it is likely that the conversation will be based more on an ideal scenario than what people see as completely practical. This is actually one of the important benefits of this phase. By opening up the discussion to an ideal scenario, the potential possibilities that can be discussed become almost limitless. This process coupled with the next phase of working to define realistically what is held as the goals and priorities supports a strong sense of ownership over the development process because people recognise that there are many directions development could go and that the way it is going is based on their active decisions. This process also aids in expanding discussion about potential development activities beyond what is normally considered and can bring light to creative projects that build on the hopes and dreams of the people in the community.

Discussions about the 'future' in regards to sustainable development prove interesting in their approach to time-scales. Development planning often takes place over short to medium time-scales—from five to ten years, and in general sustainable development focuses on time-scales that are longer—sometimes referring to the impacts of development on the following generation or two. Planning in modern sustainable forestry segments time into half-centuries or centuries while sometimes considering forestry development over multiple centuries. Sustainable forestry management is of course forced into considering larger time-scales due to the lengthy life cycles of many trees, but interestingly if one notes the historic practices of coppicing oak woodlands in Scotland for charcoal production and the near century length of their coppice cycle then it is possible to recognise the historic precedent of communities planning development/management activities over multi-generational time-scales. One of the more famous examples of such practice is the 'great law' of the Iroquois Confederation to consider the effects of their decisions upon the seventh generation from their own.

During this phase, consideration of the time-scales that communities are working with becomes important. A common dividing mechanism between short-term and long-term that people on Gigha used in discussing development is their immediate needs and their long-term aspirations. Another dividing mechanism that people on Gigha refer to is what they hope for in their lifetimes, their children's lifetimes and their grandchildren's lifetimes. In expressing their hopes and aspirations for development, people begin to move focus beyond the short-term time-scale that is so predominant in modern society, and they consider multiple steps over the long-term that lead to the realisation of their dreams. A holistic development process will plan for multiple time-scales, such as short-term—next five to ten years, mid-term—over the next thirty to fifty years, and long-term which will likely think in the perspective of the next generation.

The phase of Creating Vision does not require a lengthy process. A few well-structured conversations between participants can be effective. There are a handful of methods that can prove beneficial during this phase, but overall this phase has few appropriate methods that have been developed for its facilitation probably due to the loose nature of this phase.

The various three-dimensional modeling techniques can aid in visualising changes over the future. The PRA method of Dream Maps provides a more established tool for supporting this discussion. The Dream Mapping procedure creates a map of the present situation and a map of the desired future situation. Topics that are considered while producing a dream map are the aspired state, means for its realisation, both actors and other factors that can help or hinder the realisation of their dream, and defining their own individual roles in the process (Kumar, 2002: 178-80). Another way to promote a strong discussion during this phase is to use a multi-generational dividing mechanism and to focus specifically on questions around the idea of what types of opportunities people would like for their children to have and for their grandchildren to have; what type of place for them to grow up in, etc.

#### 6.2.1 Creating Vision on Gigha-

As with the assessment phase, on Gigha there was no formal structuring of a creating vision phase. As development planning began on Gigha, there was a desire to get into the nitty-gritty of the planning and to start to layout specific action and project points. However, because the community on Gigha did spend considerable time reflecting on the idea of a community buy-out in the first place, many of the ideas that this overall stage of development is concerned with were addressed in a non-formal manner. The discussions prior to the decision to carryout the buy-out were highly concerned with the ability of the people of Gigha to make collective ownership work, but there was also a important dimension to these conversations that was about what types of benefits would come from collective ownership and what types of changes were both needed and desired that a collective development process could enhance.

The specific discussions that took place on Gigha about certain development activities also helped strengthen the ideas promoted in the Creating Vision phase. While working to develop a design guide and a land use plan for the island, the members actively considered how the development process would affect the physical structure of the island over a period of about fifty years. Concerns were expressed about the potential



increase of holiday homes, that the style of housing design would not be in fitting with local tradition, and about the visual impact and view of the island from the ferry if new housing spread out intensively along the main road. In a very clear statement, members expressed that if in the future they were required by the council to install street lights this would be a real sign that their development activities had been inappropriate to meeting their desires.

Another interesting factor in Gigha's case was the ease with which they began to discuss long-term timescales of development. There are two factors that appear important to this aspect. First, Gigha still retains many families that have lived on the island for multiple generations and as such there is more of a common appreciation of the idea that Gigha is the home of both their grandparents and grandchildren-to-be. Second, one of the major concerns that inspired the buy-out is that from the mid-1970s there was a significant decline in families raising children on the island and the school population had fallen by about seventy percent. This was especially true of people who had grown up on Gigha themselves. This factor led to one of the major desires for the development process being the encouragement of more families and children, especially those raised on Gigha wanting to raise their children there. In this sense, people often talked about what type of environment the development process would leave for their children and grandchildren.

### **6.3 Defining Goals and Priorities**

An envisioning stage may begin by expanding and elaborating potential development pathways through a discussion of what the ideal future would look like. But from this point, the steps taken are to formalise ideas to the point where action strategies can be detailed. Communities may undertake a needs and assets survey to consider where development is needed and where there is potential for good development. Another useful method of analysis is the logical framework that involves completing a series of project categories per each desired goal, thus guiding participants through a full logical cycle of turning desires into action. The main substantial

outcome of an envisioning stage is to clearly define goals and priorities for development that will support turning the community's vision into reality.

The goals and priorities phase still promotes a theoretical understanding of what type of development is desired rather than attempting to create a structured plan for development work. But once established, goals and priorities provide a guiding focus for the planning of specific development work. One common way of describing this phase is the idea that you have to know where you want to go, before you can find a way to get there; if there is not a clear idea of the future that is desired then development activities are likely to meander about aimlessly. Furthermore, goals and priorities provide a baseline of requirements that development activities may be evaluated with.

Meadowcroft presents the idea that sustainable development provides both a 'meta-objective' and an 'idealistic benchmark by which to assess current practices'. This idea is in keeping with the commonly used statement that the ideas of sustainable development do not provide a blue-print model for development but rather a framework for structuring a holistic development process. If this is accepted, then it is reasonable to support the value of clearly defined goals and priorities for specific development programmes because each must be designed in accordance with their relation to the local conditions at that given time. This further supports the concept of sustainable development as a continual process of change and adaptation to meet local needs and desires. Meadowcroft elaborates,

Thus sustainable development is "open ended". Since it refers to a process and a standard – and not to an end state – each generation must take up the challenge anew, determining in what directions their development objectives lie, what constitutes the boundaries of the environmentally possible and the environmentally desirable, and what is their understanding of the requirements of social justice (1999: 37).

The main purpose of the goals and priorities phase is to formalise from the discussions about the theoretical approaches to development a set of points that provide a clear purpose and objective for development activities. During a community-led development process, this phase is significant for the fact that goals and priorities represent a collaboratively agreed mandate for action. Forming a set of goals and priorities through a participatory process creates the type of "tie-that-binds" people to a strong

sense of community. Goals and priorities provide the community a clear understanding of the purpose of the development process and a basis to refer to throughout the rest of the planning process.

#### **6.3.1 Methods for Defining Goals and Priorities-**

One form of analysis that is used to facilitate the discussion for defining goals and priorities is Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Constraints (SWOC) analysis. This is a basic brainstorming tool that divides discussion of ideas into these four categories as a means of encouraging deeper analysis. Another method used for setting objectives is the production of a problem tree and transforming it into an objective tree. Effectively, this tool provides little different from a basic cause-and-effect diagram, but after analysing the root problems and the effects caused it provides slightly more ease for identifying issues to be addressed from the originally acknowledged problems and transforming them into development objectives. A further method that can be used during this phase is a needs and assets survey. This survey attempts to label a community's main needs from the development process and the assets a community has to support development. It proves beneficial in drawing light to what a community does have to work with and what they need to work to create. All three of these methods though are participatory appraisal methods that have been adapted for this later phase; their real focus is on assessing the present situation rather than considering future paths.

Logical Framework Analysis, a means and ends analysis used to test the logic of a plan, has been promoted as one tool for clarifying a process's objectives. LFA uses a four by four matrix with the columns divided into 'project structure', 'indicators and values', 'means of verification', and 'assumptions and critical factors' while the rows are divided into 'aims (wider objectives)', 'project objectives', 'outputs', and 'activities and inputs'. The matrix is completed by considering the various objectives and planned development activities. The idea is that if each category is completed in full and that it cohesively relates in a logical manner then this is a good project design. There are some noticeable benefits of this method: it ensures linkages between the theoretical and the physical pieces of the project plan,

compiles with a high level of simplicity a large amount of information about the desired project, and it also helps to clarify people's expectations. However, the LFA process seems much better at dealing with the structure of individual projects than with the work of this preliminary development stage and defining development goals. Neil Price comments, 'It is *not* a set of project planning procedures, nor a set of monitoring and evaluation guidelines. It is a means by which a project may be *structured* and *described* in a logical fashion' (cited in Gosling and Edwards, 2003: 222). However, the overall reliance on the existence of logical cause-and-effect relationships for an entire project to be designed on is questionable.

On Gigha, a Force Field Analysis (a PRA tool, see Kumar, 2002: 270-83) was used to visualise the Defining Goals and Priorities discussion. As far as I am aware, this is the first documented use of the tool as a method for defining goals and priorities, and it is normally used as a participatory appraisal method. Using the primary objective of 'developing a sustainable community', the members of the Trust deliberated over the different forces that influence the way things develop on Gigha. To begin, people divided into brainstorming groups of three or four and considered what were the various forces that influenced development. Each group was asked to suggest at least one factor for each of the following: forces supporting sustainable development, forces restraining development from reaching its objective, and new forces that will need to be considered for the future.

The various factors were presented to the entire group with a large overlap of identified factors between different groups. A visual model of the force field analysis was presented as a graph with a central base line, an upper category for driving forces/positive movement and a lower category for restraining forces/negative movement. Using the visual force field analysis, each factor was discussed individually. The influence of each factor was considered. Numerical ranking is possible, but did not occur in this case. It was asked which factors could be altered and which ones could not. For those factors that could be altered, a series of issues were looked at: how to strengthen positive forces, weaken negative forces, encourage change over both the short-term and the long-term (*see Appendix B, graphing the force field analysis activity*).

This discussion generated the mainstay of the material that was to be included in Gigha's list of goals and priorities of development. To finalise the list, a working group spent time with this information and detailed the major and minor points into the ten categories that has since become Gigha's goals and priorities of development. In some cases, subjects were grouped together to provide a more substantial goal. For example, issues of maintaining the ferry and school were discussed separately to the idea of needing more social venues but it was decided that these all refer to the idea of the social infrastructure on the island.

### **6.3.2 Defining Goals and Priorities on Gigha-**

The community on Gigha decided upon ten goals and priorities for development (*see Table Three at the end of this chapter*). In Gigha's case, the establishment of goals and priorities of development occurred after several development activities had already proceeded, including the creation of the master development plan. However, during the Trust's attempts to establish sustainable indicators and sustainability criteria, it was recognised that in order to monitor and evaluate the development process effectively it was first necessary to have an understanding of what is desired. 'In order for indicators to be effective in creating change it is necessary that you first decide upon the future you would prefer; you need to be able to compare what is to what ought to be so you know if you are headed in the right direction' (Lawrence, 2000: 68).

When the discussions on Gigha began to define goals and priorities, a good understanding of the style of development the community wanted to pursue was already formulated and much assessment had already occurred. Thus, the workshop on Gigha was not as elaborate as it would need to be in a community that pursued goals and priorities as one of its first objectives. One way to ground the discussion of goals and priorities is to consider those factors that have a major influence on the process of development. It is important to discuss both those factors that support sustainable development and those that restrain it.

Gigha's goals and priorities have since provided a guide for the creation of other plans and means for judging how holistic potential activities

are. An important issue to note is that of the ten goals decided upon half of these may be viewed as having more to do with areas that are already at a high quality on the island and make it unique than an area of needed improvement, thus the goal is more about ensuring their existing quality rather than making massive developments to improve these areas. One member of the board of directors explained to me after this process was completed that having the list of goals and priorities was proving beneficial for the directors because they felt like they now had a much clearer directive from the wider community. With each discussion about specific actions, they had a list of factors that they could consider the potential effects/ outputs of the project against.

The goals and priorities that were decided upon for Gigha's development process relate directly to the circumstances and conditions on the island. Other communities may identify similar goals and priorities, but it is unlikely they would produce the same combination. It is worth noting that though the label 'goals and priorities' was used on Gigha there was no discussion on the differentiation between the two. The ten main points are generally considered the goals and the subdivisions are the priorities of each goal though there is no prioritising of one over another. These goals distinguish those things that the people of Gigha feel are meaningful for their development process, but they do not detail specific actions that should occur.

#### **6.4 Turning Goals into Action**

Once a community has developed a list of goals and priorities of development, they will have a sense of the objectives for development and can begin to plan action strategies for reaching these goals. One suggested way to proceed after goals are identified is to establish the indicators that will be used to monitor and evaluate development activities. Speaking about Sustainable Seattle's project, Lawrence states, 'Indicators came first because the process of developing indicators created opportunities to build the shared understanding required about what was happening and what mattered' (2000: 78). A good envisioning process should create a shared

understanding about what is desired from development, but by following this with establishing indicators that understanding is expanded upon and the finer details of what positive change would be are identified.

Whether the formulation of indicators is chosen as the next step or not, at some point a major part of the planning process is considering how to turn these goals into action. Establishing goals define the patterns good development should take, however there still remains a large step between this phase and the action phase. This is the step of moving from pattern design to detailed design. This movement can be one of the trickier steps in holistic development planning, for as the main focus moves towards action planning it is easy to get dislocated from the goals and more theoretical framework that has been established. At this junction, rigorous referral and comparison between goals and action, or between pattern and detail, can help to avoid this.

## **6.5 Commentary**

The stage of Forming Common Ground and Envisioning the Future is a part of the development process that is considered quite important. However, because all three phases of this stage are concerned with producing a theoretical framework for development rather than an action plan, it is often ignored during development activities. It also proves a difficult stage to explain since its theoretical nature is less concrete than that of action planning, even though it is recognised that envisioning the future in a community-led development process is the stage that aids the strongest in producing a collective understanding and common ground within the community towards the development activities.

Except for the Assessing the Current Situation phase, it remains an area where there are few methods for actively engaging in the process at this stage. A community-led development process actively expects individuals to consider their and their community's future and to answer what they want, need, hope and dream for the future. Unfortunately, it is directly at this point in the development process where there seems to be a lack of strong methods for facilitating participation. Ironically, it is also with this

development stage when carried out thoroughly, that I have seen a substantial growth in the level of inspiration within a community group towards the prospects for change and their future. A strong envisioning stage can provide a source of motivation for future development activities and serve as a type of rallying cry for the community around the development process.

After the defining of the goals and priorities and the creation of the indicators for monitoring, a couple of island people on Gigha explained to me that they felt like those two activities had substantially increased a collective understanding of what the development activities were for and where their future was headed. Prior to that, they told, people were often unclear of why specific development activities were suggested, but after this process of discussing the future as it related to development activities there was more clarity about how things fit together. It is important to note that structurally none of the development activities they were referring to had changed, rather what had changed was the way that people related these individual projects to the larger collective vision for the future that was now more clearly defined. One of the factors where this change seemed most important was in people's ability to now understand how certain development activities are serving as stepping-stones towards reaching the overall vision for the development process.

The chance to facilitate the defining of goals and priorities workshop on Gigha and the following working group proved one of the most rewarding experiences I had while doing my field-research. Interestingly, the workshop began with people seeming a bit apprehensive and confused with what was to be achieved. It was difficult to explain why after development projects had already been planned and work started that the Trust had decided that it was important to return to this more theoretical defining of goals and priorities. Furthermore, this workshop was based on a participatory-style of methodology that was not something regularly practiced on Gigha. I was skeptically asked after the introduction to the workshop, 'You want us to *define* our *goals* now- here tonight?' Only a couple of hours later the workshop ended with all the main information for what would become the goals and priorities list generated. In the specific



case of this workshop, the thing that really seemed to make the difference was asking people to break up into small groups of three or four to discuss what they saw as the important forces influencing development.

Normally, Trust meetings did not actively facilitate open discussion where members reflect on and encourage each other's ideas. However, at the same time, people on Gigha talk about the development process regularly in small groups when socialising. Once in small groups in the workshop, those who were apprehensive about not being able to provide enough information to '*define our goals now- here tonight*' appeared comfortable reflecting with their peers about what they saw as important factors influencing the development process. And when the larger group was reconvened to discuss everyone's findings there was a seemingly different group of participants who were now actively engaged in the workshop and excited about it. When the factors were one by one posted onto the force field analysis graph, people seemed encouraged by the fact that there was a high overlap of identified factors. This in its own right demonstrated that there was a strong sense of common ground and understanding over the starting point for the community-led development process.

During a separate facilitation experience with a group of environmental activists who were campaigning against the construction of a road through a semi-ancient woodland, it was possible to see how the lack of 'common ground' among a group was a substantial impediment. This group had campaigned against the proposed road for almost three years, and it had become obvious that though plans for the road remained there would be no immediate work on it. The group was growing unsure of the best way to approach the campaign and conflict began to occur among the members over possible courses of action. This escalated over a period of months during which no resolution was found. The group asked if I would be willing to facilitate a process of conflict resolution. The first workshops I facilitated with this group were focused on techniques for consensus dialogue and trying to move towards discussions based on a sense of cooperation. Though the group regularly met prior to these workshops, the nature of their meetings often turned very aggressive and argumentative. At first, these workshops seemed to be effective in resolving the conflict; at meetings the

discussions became less argumentative and had more open deliberation. However, after another month the group asked me to come back because they still found themselves at a standstill over deciding a course of action.

At this point, I was slightly puzzled about where to take this process. Before starting another series of workshops, I had to pause and try to gain a better understanding of what was going on. I started talking to people individually, asking them 'Why this campaign was important to them?', 'Did they think it had been effective to this point, and how so?', 'How they thought the group had worked well together?', and 'What they saw as options for the future of the campaign?' As answers to these questions began to generate a wealth of information, it was noticeable that very few members of the group had a clear answer to the final question. The halt in the road building was felt as a bad thing as it had taken away their sense of purpose. I began to design a new series of workshops focusing on creating a new group vision, and I also had a strong hope that the halt to the road works would be seen as an advantage to build from rather than a disadvantage. This next series of workshops and discussions required a lot of initial time covering old ground and trying to assess how the campaign had gotten to its current point. This was important because it helped people recognise that the main reason they were in this current dilemma was due to the success of their earlier work. One of the most exciting workshops was an open discussion that used a cause-and-effect style diagram to document its process based around the question of 'How to stop the road's construction?' This discussion generated many ideas about where they could take their campaign; it was also recognised that some ideas, though good, did not fit with the current scenario they were dealing with.

The final workshop I facilitated with this group was for creating a new mission statement for their campaign. This new mission statement pulled on all the information that had been collected over the previous month and supported the idea that a strong campaign at that point would try to cover a wide range of methods rather than focusing on a single activity. Through these workshops, the group members began to appreciate the potential the delay to the road works provided their campaign. Furthermore, it was decided that because of the changes to the circumstances they were dealing

with, it was also necessary to adapt the style of campaign they were undertaking. Members of the group who earlier had spoken against the idea of political lobbying were now supporting it as one of the tactics they should employ. As a whole, the energy of the group changed from one that had been defensive in nature and aimed at trying to stop the road to one that was now constructive and aimed at trying to promote the value of the woodland and its usage as something more positive than the road could provide. Rapidly after these workshops completed, the group formulated several new action points and redoubled the efforts of their campaign as if in attempt to make up for the handful of previous months during which they were stagnated in conflict. As with the defining of goals and priorities for development, the creation of a new mission statement was really about forming a collective agreement about the theoretical framework for their activities rather than detailing a structured action plan. For this group, once their mission statement was complete action planning happened quite readily, however prior to agreeing on a new theoretical framework it was their discussions on action planning that were leading to conflict.

I have worked on other projects though which have faced much difficulty with this stage of development. These projects were usually ones planned by a small group but that hoped to bring together more people from the local area into the work of the project. One example is a project I worked with to design a community gardens on a derelict piece of land in Glasgow between two council estates. Many efforts were made to engage with local people during the early stages of planning, but in the end very little interest was shown in the project prior to the work on the gardens actually commencing. Once the gardens began to be built and planted, local interest in them blossomed extensively. This type of project is slightly different than that of the Gigha case study or the case of the environmental activists in the fact that prior to the project happening there was no cohesive local group formed around this project, rather it was a goal of this project to pull such a group together.

The above example does at one level challenge the importance I have placed on forming common ground and envisioning the future as a necessary preliminary stage of development. However, there was a small

group of people who did actively engage in such a process to create a clear vision and purpose for the construction of the community gardens. This example does also show though that in certain cases, especially those where a strong group does not already exist, it is unlikely that until actual work begins people will become interested. The development process on Gigha has benefited substantially from the fact that the decision to undergo a buy-out of the island provided a level of collective understanding of their common endeavor. Local-level development in areas where there is seemingly no effective coalition of interested individuals or sense of community face a much broader challenge of first figuring out appropriate ways to bring together such people.

<b>Table Three: The Isle of Gigha's Goals and Priorities of Development</b>
<b>Community Spirit and Wellbeing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● High level of communication</li> <li>● High number of community events and activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ With strong participation by islanders</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Community spirit is directly affected by social and economic sectors</li> <li>● The size of the community matters</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural Heritage</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintain cultural links to history and heritage of Gigha</li> <li>● Encourage cultural heritage to fit in with development and modernisation</li> <li>● Provide more information on cultural heritage and promote sites of special interest on island</li> </ul>
<b>Quality of Life</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Good standard of living</li> <li>● No crime</li> <li>● Youth and families as a key concern</li> <li>● Services and entitlements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Are people receiving what they are entitled to?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Natural Heritage and Environmental Quality</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conserve high standard of environmental quality</li> <li>● Natural heritage is connected to both 'wild' and 'managed' land <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Trees, woods, beaches, quiet places, fields and grazing land, dykes and ditches, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Management and maintenance as key priority</li> <li>● Promote knowledge and care for wildlife</li> </ul>
<b>Local Economy and Employment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There is an immediate need for more employment opportunities</li> <li>● Promote a diversified and flexible economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Competing businesses could become a problem</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Housing Quality</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Houses need to be beyond warm and dry</li> <li>● Promote building and refurbishment to a high environmental standard</li> <li>● Greater number of houses on the island <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Deal with issue of hidden homes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Agriculture</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Keeping the milk tanker will remain a priority</li> <li>● Attempt to diversify farming to make it less vulnerable</li> <li>● Connect farming practices with environmental management</li> </ul>
<b>Social Infrastructure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Services provided for community benefit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Maintain school</li> <li>■ Maintain ferry</li> <li>■ Leisure Facilities (indoor)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Increase the number of social venues for the use of islanders</li> </ul>

**Sustainability of Development Process and Trust Work**

- Assure that the management of the development process will continue at a high standard
- The Trust needs a secure income that will cover development activities
  - Lessen dependency on grants
- Promote a high level of community interaction and participation with the development process
  - Islanders need to feel a sense of ownership and empowerment towards the development process

**'Be Careful of Overdevelopment'**

- It is important to guard against overdevelopment
  - Overdevelopment would lead to a reduction in quality of life
  - Gigha should not become over-crowded
  - Gigha should not become a retirement island or second-home island
- If too much development happens immediately it could overwhelm Gigha's community spirit and cultural heritage

The final step in the cycle for planning sustainable development is Monitoring and Evaluation. During the first cycle of the planning process, monitoring and evaluation is often referred to as the last stage of planning. However, if properly implemented, monitoring and evaluation becomes a continuous process out with the standard planning cycle. It is referred to as a stage because the initial implementation of methods for monitoring and evaluation require the same type of detailed planning that occurs in the other development stages, but once initially implemented it becomes a regular form of assessment that is naturalised into the overall development process. The goal of monitoring and evaluation is to assure that development activities are being implemented to plan and that these projects are resulting in the types of positive changes that are desired. Attempts are made to formalise effective means for evaluating the quality of the development occurring and to monitor projects for undesired / adverse impacts so they can be mitigated. The hope for using monitoring and evaluation techniques is to draw attention to potential negative outcomes before they cause lasting harm. In regards to positive outcomes, the attempt is to evaluate the development process to understand what has caused positive change and what were the circumstances that were important in their success.

One of the reasons to try to better understand the positive outcomes of development activities and the circumstances in which they occurred is to clearly define when a specific project is appropriate and can be beneficially replicated or adapted. Monitoring and evaluation are usually viewed as the establishment of an internal system of checks and balances to ensure the sustainability of a development process. However, they can also be used to provide valuable information about what factors influence positive change. This can aid the internal development process by creating a better understanding of how to support sustainable development, but it may also serve as an external resource by producing a more detailed and valuable account of both an overall development process and specific development projects that other people can refer to. If information about specific projects

and activities is detailed and includes an evaluation of what influenced its success, then it is possible for another group interested in a similar project to consider how such a project would relate to their local circumstances and effect their own development process.

Before considering the practical techniques for monitoring and evaluation, it is necessary to recognise that the desire to monitor and evaluate the sustainability of a development process creates a substantial theoretical challenge. This challenge is based in defining what demonstrates the sustainability of a development process and considering how one is to go about measuring positive trends towards greater sustainable development. What is sustainable development to be evaluated by?

### **7.1 Development versus Growth**

When considering sustainable development, it is important that the theoretical difference between development and growth is acknowledged. Though the distinction between development and growth is often brought to light in discussions of sustainable development, the lack of clear and agreed definitions for both concepts often leads to a confusion over what the actual attributes of the two concepts are. Economist Herman Daly draws point to the difference between the concepts of growth and development as perceived from an ecological viewpoint. Growth means an increase in size through addition of material. To develop means to expand potentialities and to bring about a fuller or better state. Furthermore, Daly points out the fact that the earth's ecosystem does develop/evolve, but that it does not grow or increase in its overall material size because it is a closed system. Daly presents an understanding of the distinctions between growth and development that may be criticised as rather elementary, however it does provide important insight because of the recognition of growth as quantitative changes and development as qualitative changes (1996a: 267-8).

Considering this division between growth and development, we can then pose the question does sustainable development mean a focus on qualitative change more than quantitative change? Daly later defines growth and development in more depth, 'Growth refers to an increase in service that



results from an increase in stock and throughput, with the two efficiency ratios constant. Development refers to an increase in the efficiency ratios, with stock constant (or alternatively, an increase in service with throughput constant)' (1996b: 330). Both concepts are confused further by their relationships with the idea of "social progress" because both share popular sentiment in the idea that more growth or more development means more social progress. Social progress requires a contextual defining from within the goals and aspirations of a given society. It is possible for a society or a culture to either value or ignore a common social goal such as justice, equality, social welfare or sustainability for that matter. Thus, any social goal or aspiration has the potential to be reconsidered or abandoned, so the defining of social progress is malleable.

Development and growth can both be seen as means that may be used to reach a given ends as defined from the prevailing definition of social progress. However, these two means result in notable differences that are important to take into account when considering how best to achieve sustainability. Ironically, the idea of sustainable growth is an oxymoron. Economic growth is commonly based on the idea of increases to capital, financial and labor activities. Recent economic theories of growth suggest two sources of growth: the types of endowment increases already mentioned – "working harder", and "working smarter" – technological increases that result in more efficient work thus consuming endowment increases slower. Some suggestions have been made that economic growth can continue by "working smarter" but still result in sustainable development. However, real world analysis of economies that have experienced significant increases in GDP also demonstrates a corresponding increase in resource consumption. This idea is made apparent by the recent work in ecological footprints that finds if the world's population was to live at the average standard of consumption of a person in the UK, we would require three earths to supply the raw materials; and in the case of the American standard it would require six earths (Desai and Riddlestone, 2002: 15, 28).

To contrast, one of the main judging criterion of 'improvement' in a steady-state economic system is based on the idea of service instead of growth, thus the concern is not with an ever enlarging economy but one that

works to better meet human needs. As an important feature of this, the idea of throughput—the needed raw materials to produce stock and services as inputs, and the waste and pollution as outputs—is designed for efficiency. It is acknowledged in this model that it is possible to increase overall service while decreasing the throughput, and that increasing throughput will not directly lead to increases in service. Daly suggests, following on from this idea of service, under a steady-state model of economics measurements of growth, such as GDP, prove non-meaningful and that a new form of social accounting could be based on measuring the value of service/benefit and the value of throughput/cost (1996b: 326-31). It would also be seemingly possible then to further divide measures of throughput into those that come from renewable resources and those from nonrenewable resources, thus starting an analysis of a system's protection or deterioration of its long-term capacity. Naturally some development activities will require growth to occur to support them, but by clearly distinguishing between the concepts of growth and development it is possible to begin to recognise that growth is not always related to further development.

On Gigha, the formation of their goals and priorities of development signified the importance of protecting the strong social and environmental assets that already exist on the island and ensuring that development occurs in a fashion that does not hinder these aspects. The community of Gigha is quick to point to their economy and the lack in possibilities for employment as an area needing improvement, but discussions also refer not to a desire for substantial growth in wealth as much as the importance of creating secure and sustainable livelihoods in order for a person to feel comfortable in their ability to provide for their family into the foreseeable future. It is recognised on Gigha that economic growth does not always result in an increase in security.

In the development plan, the idea of the difference between growth and development is addressed in regards to the possibility for quarrying activities on the island. It was decided that a small-scale quarrying operation on-island could provide much of the material needed for development resources without depending on expensive transport from an off-island quarry. Quarrying as a large-scale operation was also used as a model of an

unsustainable economic activity. On Gigha, this proves a powerful example because people are familiar with the debates that surrounded the potential building of the super-quarry on the Isle of Harris. If large-scale quarrying for export was carried out on the island, an initial benefit would occur from this operation. However, quarrying would only prove possible for a limited amount of time and in the process would likely cause irreparable harm to the local environment. This is an example of an activity that a growth based judgment would favor while a judgment based on the idea of sustainable development would see as dangerous. Small-scale quarrying to meet local needs can be considered sustainable and beneficial, but large-scale quarrying to provide an export product would only have limited benefits that would be outweighed by long-term adverse impacts.

Growth at its simplest is about expanding and increasing inputs in labor and capital activities. Development is about improving and making things fuller, and though sometimes growth is needed to encourage development, bigger is not always better. Growth models are most commonly used in conjunction with economic measurements such as GDP and are criticised for their one-dimensional view towards what symbolises improvement. If we consider another indicator of economic growth NNI (net national income), we can see an example from Gigha where bigger is clearly not better. Prior to the buy-out, a measurement of Gigha's NNI including the wealth of the laird would have proved significantly higher than it is today. However, this figure would entirely ignore the sense of instability people felt living and working under laird ownership and the major efforts that have been made through the process of community ownership to increase people's sense of security in their living and working conditions. Also, this demonstrates how easily a growth measurement can be skewed. With the removal of one factor, a person whose income is substantially larger than the rest of the population, the value drops drastically.

Neil Thin observes that the traditional view of sustainable development maintains the 'misleading implication that economy and society are separate entities or even systems' (2002: 24), and suggests that recognising that economics is a part of society would promote a better

understanding of sustainable development. 'Trying to distinguish economic and social objectives and indicators is therefore unhelpful' (Thin, 2002: 25). This provides both another challenge for evaluating sustainability and also another reason why a criterion for judgment based on expansion of capital and labor activities produces a skewed measurement. If one recognises that the economy is a humanly created and managed system, that it is not a naturally occurring system of the earth's ecosystem, then it is possible to recognise that economics is a part of the larger social system/society. As Thin points out, the social goals established in regards to economic activity should be based on the larger objectives of society and humanity. In this sense, if rapid economic growth often leads to increased insecurity or if rapid consumption of the earth's non-renewable resources leads to the inability of future generations to meet their direct survival needs, then there is a need to reassess the alignment between economic goals and larger societal objectives and more generally the idea of social progress.

By understanding the economy as one function of wider social processes, we can begin to analyse economic activity for the effects it has on society. On Gigha, the people expressed clearly that they want development to support security in livelihoods and an aspect of social fairness in wage distributions. These are clear calls for economic development that will include an aspect of growth. However, it is also expressed that economic growth alone will not support the achievement of the objectives for Gigha's development process. Furthermore, it is acknowledged rapid economic growth could cause very negative impacts and overwhelm the social processes on Gigha.

Ziauddin Sardar explains that in Islamic economics the concept of *tazkiyah* grounds its sense of progress in a belief in expanding an infrastructure to meet basic societal needs and once created working to maintain that infrastructure in equilibrium with the society (Sardar, 1999: 57-60). It is this type of connection between societal needs and economics that helps to provide a better form of evaluating economic activities; rather than trying to judge a single function of the social system based on its own criteria it must be judged on its service to the whole of society. Sardar further

explains that in Islamic economics it is recognised that economies undergoing early formation steps do require substantial growth to reach a point of vitality, but after a certain point it becomes more productive to try to maintain that system and its security than to seek further growth. The growth stages of a tree are used as a metaphor for this idea because a young tree focuses much of its growth on its height and its canopy while an old tree focuses more on its root structure. This understanding of economic growth presents the idea that growth is at times the appropriate function of the economy, but as an economy matures continued growth should no longer be the main priority.

As the study of sustainable development becomes more advanced, so do the tools to consider what is good development and what signifies improvement. An important recognition is that there is not one blueprint for what is sustainable development. An activity or project in one community that would provide benefit for the population could have disastrous effects if pursued by another community. Furthermore, sustainable development presents the ideals of a process not a specified end state. This of course complicates the situation, making the holistic nature of sustainable development and the multiple variations of exemplar projects difficult to capture within one development theory.

Several of the more successful tools and theories created to support sustainable development are successful because of the primary fact that they have not tried to encapsulate everything but have instead focused on one primary area of development. In this way, these tools can be pieced together in unique manners to fulfill the individual puzzle of each community. Some of the more notable tools and theories that have been developed are ecological footprints, bioremediation techniques, life-cycle cost accounting, natural waste treatment systems, community supported agriculture schemes. The entire range of activities that can support achieving sustainable development are extremely diverse. The real challenge comes in appropriately defining the needs of the specific community and environment thus allowing the identification of appropriate techniques and projects.

## **7.2 Adapting to Change**

Sustainable development requires an acknowledgement of the factors of constant change that influence the pursuit of social progress. 'The new paradigm needs change and adaptability in its genes: for if nothing is permanent but change, then managing and coping with change has to be one inherent in the paradigm itself' (Chambers, 2003: 14). This requires plans for sustainable development not only to be flexible and adaptable but also reflexive enough to recognise when things are changing. Diversity is one of the keys for good sustainable development that contains the buoyancy to overcome changes that have adverse effects on one development sector. Another key is not compromising future options with a development plan that over-exploits an area of limited potential.

The best example that demonstrates this reality is in regards to the rapid changes that can drastically effect a local economy through market changes. Unfortunately for the people of Gigha, changes in agricultural policies and economics have required a singular focus on dairy production. For farms dependent almost entirely on income from milk sales, fluctuations in price and policy can be the making or ruining of a farm. The tourism industry also regularly undergoes similar fluctuations, and while Gigha's tourism is already dependent on a large-turnover during the peak-season again market fluctuations can mean drastic ups and down for a small island economy. In an example based on environmental issues, fishing once sustained many livelihoods on Gigha but because of over-fishing and depleted populations very few people can effectively make a living from it anymore. However, all of these changes and potential for fluctuation are known; the real concern is with changes that occur without much warning. What will happen to prices of imported goods if there is a spike in oil prices, or what will the effects of climate change mean for the environment of Gigha?

In regards to planning for sustainable development, it is not really the task to try to predict all the possible changes that could occur in the future but to create a resilience that can overcome a shock or meet a growing demand. One factor is not putting all investments or employment into one

sector. Another factor is about attempting to lessen dependency on external systems. It also proves beneficial to decentralise control away from one authority so more people are effectively able to monitor and make needed adaptations. This is a goal with providing leases to farmers for all of their needed grazing lands rather than using seasonal rents. The 'precautionary principle', the idea that development should proceed at limited scales and with intensive monitoring in areas with limited knowledge about future impacts, is one idea that is often suggested for sustainable development.

### **7.3 Methods for Monitoring and Evaluating Development**

There is one reason that growth models appear appealing: they can clearly tell if growth has happened. However, as we have seen, they do not always tell what we need to know. It is easy to measure growth, but it is also dangerous to mistake growth as an achievement of social progress. While growth is figured in quantitative sums, development is much trickier and requires qualitative assessment. Monitoring and evaluating development to ensure we are on the right track is important, but there is no one magic number that will indicate this with development.

There are several questions that one is trying to answer when monitoring development. Is development leading towards reaching the desired goals? Is development occurring in a manner that will not compromise the integrity of the social and environmental sectors? Are there any problem areas that need to be dealt with? Are the benefits of development being experienced by everyone? Are the established goals and priorities still the most appropriate in regards to the current situation?

Sustainable development requires a holistic overview to take into account the various overlapping areas of development that are part of the bigger picture. In the same fashion, monitoring and evaluating sustainable development requires a holistic view to consider all the areas being effected by the development activities. One method for monitoring that is becoming more common and was chosen by Gigha is the establishment of Sustainability Indicators.

### 7.3.1 Indicators of Sustainability-

In order to effectively monitor and evaluate the progress of development activities on Gigha, it was decided that the development of a series of indicators to be employed was necessary. Utilising sustainability indicators is becoming the most popular way to monitor and evaluate development. There are now a handful of professionals who have facilitated the creation of indicators in several communities and are thus considered professionals in the field (notably Bell and Morse, authors of *Sustainability Indicators* (1999) and *Measuring Sustainability* (2003), and Hart, founder of Sustainable Measures consultancy). Still, there is no one established method for defining indicators; in fact the literature notably focuses on what is a good indicator and the different types of indicators while spending little time addressing the strategies communities may employ when trying to define their specific set of indicators.

Before concentrating on the process that Gigha has used for the production of their indicators, let us focus on what the professionals say about good indicators. The purpose of indicators is to provide some defined sense of where development is, how well it is doing, and how far away it is from achieving the desired goals. 'An indicator is something that helps you understand where you are, which way you are going and how far you are from where you want to be' (Hart, internet: 2000). MacGillivray explains that the goal of using indicators is action: to protect what is valued and to improve trends that are not going in the right direction. Furthermore, indicators should provide something meaningful about the development trends occurring in the community (2000: 81). Indicators should allow communities to prioritise where more development work is necessary. Through utilising a series of indicators, the hope is that it will become possible to develop a holistic picture of the interconnecting factors of development and how they effect each other.

In regards to establishing needed action from utilising indicators, this requires that indicators are timely. 'A good indicator alerts you to a problem before it gets too bad and helps you recognize what needs to be done to fix the problem' (Hart, internet: 2000). The rigor of each indicator should be tested to make sure that it is measurable and that change in that indicator



signifies something that is useful and understandable. The overall series of indicators should also be considered to ensure that it covers all the main areas of development and paints a holistic picture of how the development is doing. Maclaren suggests that sustainability indicators should be, 'integrating, forward looking, distributional, and developed with input from multiple stakeholders in the community' (1999: 11).

Participatory formation of indicators is an important part of the sustainable development process. This allows people to decide what matters and express what defines good development. However, there are many professional complaints and warnings about the participatory formation of indicators suggesting that this may complicate the process and jeopardise the quality of the indicators. In my experience, unless the professional is deeply ingrained in the community she is working with, participation of the community ensures the rigor of the indicators by grounding them in the reality of the local context. It is the local community, not the professional, that has a strong grasp on the subtleties of a specific community. The professional is usually a generalist, learning what is best practice among a variety of communities. While the members of the local community are the ones who hold specialist knowledge of the existing context which development is to take place within. On Gigha, it was the locals who pointed out to the consultants hired to complete the land use plan that one site could occasionally become boggy though avoidable by slightly moving the site and that another site was extremely close to a known place of important archaeology which would mean that planning approval would be impossible. After much discussion about the problems participation brings, Bell and Morse state, 'We would suggest that the decision is not so much whether participation should happen, but how best to achieve it' (2003: 27).

### 7.3.2 Formation of Gigha's Indicators for Monitoring Development-

As a target of the Sustainable Development subject area in Gigha's Development plan, it was stated that indicators would be formed for monitoring the development process. A total of thirty-two indicators -nine to be reported quarterly and twenty-three to be reported annually- and a tourist survey were created (*see Appendix C for a complete list*). The

indicator process on Gigha was divided into eight separate areas in an attempt to elaborate a process that would secure community participation in their design.

- 1) Elaborate Community Vision for the future and development
- 2) Define Goals and Priorities of Development
- 3) Brainstorm possible indicators
- 4) Refine Indicators and establish a list
- 5) Secure community understanding and acceptance of indicators
- 6) Implementation of regular monitoring and evaluation
- 7) Collecting information and dissemination
- 8) Decide needed courses of action based on information

In regards to this section, it is mainly points three to five that will be discussed—the creation of the indicators. It should also be noted that there were two works that were of primary importance to providing guidance to forming an indicator process on Gigha, *Neighborhood Sustainability Indicators Guidebook* by Crossroads Resource Center (1999) and *Indicators of Sustainable Community* by Sustainable Seattle (1998); both are manuals describing the processes used by other communities who accomplished similar local-defining of indicators.

The beginning research and technical work to establish the format and methods to lead a series of participatory workshops to create the indicators was carried out by the Trust. Several aspects were defined during this process. The most significant was the division for indicators into four subject categories based on those used in the guidebook by Crossroads. Local Indicators are to express complex relationships in a concise way, symbolise significant links between goals and are mainly for internal usage. Cross-community Indicators represent more general goals of sustainability in a holistic manner thus making them ideal for comparison between other communities working with sustainable development and indicators. Context Indicators explain the local context through census-style data and are important for external usage. Long-Term Indicators express the community's long-term vision and symbolise true benchmarks of achievement in the development process; and these are also beneficial in helping to establish the idea that sustainable development is not an overnight process.

The first major participation community members had with the indicator process was during a members' meeting that mainly focused on a discussion of the vision for development and beginning to define goals and priorities of development. At the meeting, the idea of indicators and how they would be used was presented. A working group was formed of people interested in dedicating significant time to their creation. However, all members were given a brief handout about indicators, asked to consider the goals that were discussed and those things that would indicate success towards reaching those goals. A handful of members submitted their brainstorming of indicators, though the majority of the task was left to the working group.

The brainstorming activity was supported with four different types of information. First, the four categories of indicators were defined, each with a clear explanation of what each type of indicators would ideally accomplish and general points for consideration. Second, indicators for each category could be considered based on the need to cover all ten established goals of development. Third, a list of indicators used by other communities was provided for examples. Fourth, several questions were considered to stimulate the brainstorming: What types of changes clearly link to the development goals? What are the long-term visions, goals and dreams for Gigha?. Using these tools and a lot of creativity, the working group discussed ideas for possible indicators developing an initial list of just over forty indicators.

These indicators were then individually considered in more depth in order to refine them into usable forms. For this part, each indicator was judged by five points: is it clearly defined, can the data be easily obtained without professional/scientific measurements, is the indicator measurable and will the data actually express a value of some type, does it measure something useful and relevant and will local people care about this, and does a change in this indicator suggest a course of action. As a whole, the overall rigor and coverage of the indicator series were considered in a goal/indicator map by listing each goal on the horizontal axis, each indicator on the vertical axis, and marking which goals each indicator was telling something about. In general, those indicators that cover many goals

will be the most useful indicators. Through these methods some indicators were rejected for being unclear, and other indicators were rejected for being too complicated while only covering one or two goals. In a few cases, it was recognised that a goal was not covered well enough and a new indicator was created.

Originally, it was decided that no more than forty indicators would be used. Though this was agreed to be a lot, it seemed a responsible number when considering there were four different categories of indicators and ten goals. Some communities establish only a handful of 'highlight' indicators which always seem too few to give a real understanding of where development is at, while other communities use over a hundred indicators which seem to only baffle people with numerous figures and graphs. It was also decided that for each category of indicators, we would assure that each goal had at least two indicators that told something about movement towards that goal. It was through establishing indicators that were holistic and overlapped multiple goals that a lengthy list was avoided. It was decided after all the indicators were created that it would be beneficial to have some indicators measured quarterly rather than annually. Since the monitoring process is new, it would require at least three years before the indicators demonstrate any significant trends if only measured annually. The list of indicators includes some really creative ones such as the number of times people hear and see a cuckoo each year; an indicator that tells a lot about the quality of land management and farm practices which in modern times have caused a reduction in the cuckoo's population.

Finally, to finish the establishment part of the indicator process before monitoring and evaluation could be implemented, work was completed to formalise their usage. The lists of indicators were printed including a new tourist survey card. An annual household survey was created that collects information for ten of the indicators, both quantitative and qualitative data. Database software was used to create several pages for managing the input data in order to chart and graph the trends as multiple years worth of information is collected.

### 7.3.3 Sustainability Judgement Criteria-

The Trust identified as part of the section on Sustainable Development in their plan the idea of creating 'sustainable criteria'. The criteria was desired as a means to judge the 'sustainability' of the potential outcomes/impacts of proposed projects and development on Gigha. As an example, if someone proposed to the Trust the idea of a new business, the sustainable criteria could be employed to determine how well this business would fit with and help promote the vision for sustainable development that the people of Gigha had defined. Investors have traditional methods they employ for considering if they should invest in a project or business, in a similar way this is the desired accomplishment of the sustainable criteria.

However, as background research began into this idea it became clear that this task has not been undertaken before. There are of course models for Environmental Impact Assessments and now also Social Impact Assessments, but nothing that similar to what was being hoped for here. Both EIAs and SIAs are too technical and lengthy. For sustainability judgement criteria to be functional, it would have to be something that can be employed by the directors during the course of a single discussion on said project. Since there are no functioning models to consider, the Trust has found it difficult to make significant inroads to creating criteria that fulfill the desired purpose. Some inroads have been made by using the list of goals and priorities for development as a general checklist of things to consider when discussing a potential project, but this does not accomplish the type of auditing that was hoped of from sustainability judgement criteria.

In traditional models used by investors, the standard consideration is the proposed profit margin for the project or company. This would definitely be one criterion of the overall sustainability judgement criteria, but if assessing the 'sustainability' a project will result in it requires a much broader array of factors taken into account. Some of these factors will be unique to Gigha, defined likely from their goals and priorities of development. However, there must be some factors that would be used in a sustainable criteria that would be near universal across communities. This then becomes an issue of clarifying what types of principles are projects working for sustainable development designed to.

Before it is possible to define these principles, it is important to clearly define what 'progress' means for a community, and in many cases this will be a redefinition of progress away from a consideration based solely on economic growth. Redefining progress is about acknowledging a new set of goals which development is trying to achieve. Neil Thin suggests, 'Here, we are concerned not with the detail of strategies and operations but with ethics and with the description of overarching visions of lasting social progress' (2002: 47). Thin also draws an important distinction between those works that suggest a 'negative' and 'defensive' agenda and those that present 'positive' goals (2002: 50). If we are to develop towards more sustainable systems, the goals of that development and our understanding of progress must be based on making positive change rather than merely mitigating adverse impacts of humanity's patterns of living.

One ecological design system that is formed with this type of positive goals is permaculture. A quick review of this system will be beneficial. The concept of permaculture began in the late 1970's in Australia through the work of Bill Mollison and David Holmgren (*Permaculture 1*, 1978). Permaculture is a set of methods and practices for designing patterns of human living in a sustainable manner with direct relationship to the local ecosystem. Permaculture is grounded in three ethics that are similar to those of the 'three-pillars motif' (Thin, 2002) of sustainable development. 'At the heart of permaculture is a fundamental desire to do what we believe to be right and to be part of the solution, rather than part of the problem. In other words, a sense of ethics. The ethics of permaculture can be summed up as: Earth care, People care, and Fair Share' (Whitefield, 1997: 5). Similarly the principles of sustainable development are described as Environmental Quality, Social Justice, and Equity. Moving on from these basic ethics which should be ensured within all permaculture projects, practitioners have also developed a series of principles based on what they have determined are akin to processes of natural systems to enlighten the way we structure our actions (*see Appendix D for a description of these principles*).

Forming sustainability judgement criteria for project evaluation proves difficult because it is not clearly defined what the purpose of sustainable development is. Furthermore, it is not defined what factors a

project should support and thus be judged for. As evaluation moves away from a mere dependence on economic growth, other measurements must become important for demonstrating the quality of a given project. In some cases, these will need to be new and creative criteria for evaluation. One example of an innovative factor in evaluating is the Soil Association's consideration of annual increase to topsoil from organic farming. Because the health of the overall ecosystem is dependent on the health of the topsoil and because modern agricultural practices result in an extensive annual loss of topsoil, this judgment based on organic farming practices' ability to replenish topsoil is very appropriate. Table Three presents four factors that might prove valuable in forming a sustainability judgement criteria.

<b>Table Four: Potential Factors for Sustainability Judgement Criteria</b>
<p><b>Economic Solvency</b> Instead of a focus on economic growth, the focus could shift to a project's ability to demonstrate solvency. Will a project produce enough energy / capital to meet its continued inputs? Have the required inputs of energy and capital been properly assessed and accounted for? Are clear pathways for cycling outputs back into inputs defined?</p>
<p><b>Number of livelihoods supported vs. required resources</b> Considering a sense of social equity, the more resources a project consumes then the more livelihoods it should support. Over time, an actual ratio (the number of people supported from the profits of the activity / the quantity of natural resources consumed) could be established based on both a common standard and an acceptable limit. This may also consider where resources come from (how far away) or more appropriately factor transportation fuel as a required resource.</p>
<p><b>Dependency on local markets vs. export markets</b> If a project/business is providing the sale of a service or commodity as its main function, will its consumption depend on local or export markets. Though it is usually viewed that export markets provide more opportunity for growth, it is also recognised that fulfilling a need of the local market can lead to more long-term security. This factor may also consider the level of competition a new project would cause in the market (especially at the local-level).</p>
<p><b>Environmental factors: impacts, benefits, mitigation</b> A project should be assessed based on something similar to that of EIA's criteria, however EIA is too complex for easy local application. It is also important to not only judge a project for the adverse impacts it will have but to also consider the positive benefits a project may have on the environment.</p>

## **7.4 Commentary**

It was suggested in the previous chapter, that if you want to know if you are on the right path, you must first know where you want to go. This was suggested in regards to creating goals for development within a community. However, this idea can be expanded further to encompass generally the concept of sustainable development. Since we currently live in an unsustainable society, we are far from knowing exactly what a sustainable society would look like. As more research and practical applications of sustainable development become apparent a vision is slowly clarified, but still a solid understanding of the structure of a sustainable society is at best an educated guess. This naturally creates certain problems and restraints for practicing good sustainable development.

Definition of those principles that ground the design of sustainable development will aid in increasing this understanding. It is also necessary to acknowledge and record those patterns and trends that create success in moving towards a higher level of sustainability. The beginning of this chapter focuses on trying to distinguish between the idea of sustainable development and the idea of economic growth. This is not done to directly attack the idea of growth, rather it is done to challenge the hegemony with which economic growth has dominated concepts of development. Kaplan suggests,

The history of Western capitalist society was viewed as the recipe for development. In other words, what one needed to do was to analyse the conditions which precipitated economic growth in Western society and apply one's analysis to the engineering of economic growth in underdeveloped countries; the result of this growth would be development (1996: 34).

It has already been acknowledged that economic growth is often needed to encourage development, but it must also be noted that growth does not equate as development nor will growth always have positive results.

E.F. Schumacher's analysis of economics in *Small is Beautiful* (1973) provides a useful line of thought. 'The market therefore represents only the surface of society and its significance relates to the momentary situation as it exists there and then. There is no probing into the depths of things, into the natural or social facts that lie behind them. In a sense, the market is the



institutionalisation of individualism and non-responsibility' (1973: 42). Similar to Thin's claim that economics must be viewed as one functioning piece of society, Schumacher expresses concern that economic rules lack any connection to social values and objectives. He furthers this concern by explaining economics weighting on the short-term rather than the long-term and the practice of economics 'to ignore man's dependence on the natural world' (1973: 41). These all provide valuable points for an attempt at redefining progress through a development narrative: development should be considered as a process of strengthening social systems, progress thus should be linked with larger social objectives, success of development should be judged based on the effects it has over the long-term, and activities that result in a decline in the health of the natural system should be recognised as directly compromising the strength of the social system.

Replacing the economic growth-analysis of social progress with sustainability judgement criteria proves difficult in the fact that this whole approach directly shifts the analysis from a quantitative one to a form of analysis that must be both qualitative and also more complex due to its holistic approach. Thus with sustainability, it is unlikely that there will ever be one index that will become as prominent as GDP is in growth-analysis models. However, as more projects are analysed for the sustainability of their outcomes/impacts, it is likely that many principles that support sustainable development will become more defined and easier to analyse. Currently, the evaluation of development practices aimed at identifying those principles and factors that support the sustainability of the process could prove highly beneficial for producing well-defined sustainability criteria for both designing projects and analysing them.

It is interesting that it is at this point in the development process that this conflict over defining sustainable development becomes so prominent. This conflict did not cause severe stumbling blocks during earlier stages of the development process on Gigha, but at this point of trying to formulate appropriate monitoring and evaluation techniques it became a significant challenge. Ironically, it may be the same reason that led to this difficulty that also proved one of main learning benefits of this development stage for the community on Gigha. In one way, this can be defined as the idea of legacy,

what will be left behind for those who follow in our steps. Establishing monitoring and evaluation methods requires people to clearly think about the effects of a development process over the long-term. This is to think beyond the goals of one generation and to consider how the legacy of development will influence future generations to meet their own needs and goals.

Through the previous chapters of this section, the important stages of planning sustainable development on Gigha are identified. The discussion of these stages attempts to elaborate the important processes that can be generalised beyond Gigha and considered as the main stages of the planning process in community-led sustainable development. In this concluding chapter of the planning section, these development stages are further discussed with direct connection to the types of skill and value learning they engender. The purpose of this discussion is to examine those activities that play an important role in communities securing a sustainable development agenda and also to consider how these various stages holistically relate with one another. Following this, the discussion turns towards those aspects of planning sustainable development that may be identified as distinct from other forms of planning.

### **8.1 Development as Continuous Learning: Cycles instead of Stages**

Prior to discussing the specific stages of the planning process, it is important to better explain how the planning process is being theoretically perceived. Though the word “stages” is used to distinguish specific parts of the whole process, in reality the process is neither neatly divided into distinct practices nor fully linear stages. The idea of discrete stages is used in this work because it facilitates a logical discussion of the various activities that are involved in development planning. In regards to the reality of practicing development planning, it is more beneficial to recognise that the process of planning occurs more through cyclical design than in a linear manner.

First, it is important to refer back to the idea that sustainable development implies continual adaptation and change rather than a specific end state. Thus, as development continues over an extended period it is necessary for communities to return to earlier stages of the planning process in both a reflective capacity and to rework major areas. There is of course a degree of linear flow through the defined stages—that assessing the current situation and envisioning the future come before planning specific

development activities and that monitoring development cannot completely start until development projects are implemented. However, there is also a clear acknowledgement that these stages do not neatly finish and then you proceed to the next stage. For example, when planning specific projects and activities it is necessary to return to the assessment phase to consider how such an activity will relate to local circumstances. The planning process often occurs in a fluid manner at the local-level and can be seen to evolve through regenerating cycles where earlier ideas are reflected on and revised. The flexibility apparent in this system is critical for development to occur in a timely and updated manner.

Second, it is also important to acknowledge that active participation in a planning process may be viewed as a powerful educational system. By becoming the owners of their own community's development process through planning how it will occur, people naturally undertake a learning process about how to effect development and how to create it in a sustainable manner. From each stage of the planning cycle, new information and opinions are generated which are reflexively brought back into the development cycle. In this manner, the process is continually evolving and changing. In reference to sustainable development, it could be referred to as 'deepening' since as people actively and experientially learn from the development process their depth of understanding about sustainable development increases and a sensitivity towards the holistic nature of sustainability advances.

The dynamic relationship between the educational potential of a community-led development process and the cultural awareness of issues about sustainability should not be overlooked. A positive feedback loop between these two factors is apparent. As people undertake a community-led sustainable development process, they interact with ideas and information about how they secure livelihoods for themselves while preserving the resources for future generations to also meet their needs. The capacity for individuals and communities to actively engage in sustainable development increases over the period of such engagement. This is especially true in communities where efforts are made to encourage co-operative inquiry and action learning.

The experiential learning theory, originally discussed by Kolb and Fry (1975) and Kolb (1984), provides a better understanding of how both individual and community learning are important parts of a development cycle. Experiential learning theory defines learning as, 'the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience' (Kolb 1984, p. 41). Kolb identifies four stages that create the experiential learning cycle: *concrete experience* (CE), *reflective observation* (RO), *abstract conceptualization* (AC) and *active experimentation* (AE). Though the cycle can be entered at any point, it is viewed that each stage follows the previous in the above order. Zuber-Skerritt provides a more simplified language for these stages: *plan, act, observe* and *reflect* (1992: 11). This learning cycle values both concrete/real-world experiences and abstract thinking/reflection about a given situation as important processes in how we gain knowledge about our world. Observation of action and reinterpretation of knowledge frameworks based on review of previous outcomes are continuous actions throughout the experiential learning cycle. Breathnach suggests that the reflexivity embodied in the learning cycle is essential for encouraging responsive and proactive development rather than reactive change (2006: 13).

Experiential learning theory suggests a role for participants in the development process that is significantly different than what usually occurs. Important to establishing experiential learning cycles is that participants have strong feelings of responsibility towards the development process, and for this to occur active participation in formulating, implementing, and managing development is necessary. 'The more participants are engaged in each stage of the learning process, the greater their influence on system development and learning' (Breathnach, 2006: 21). People employing this type of learning cycle create an expanding knowledge framework about sustainable development by intermixing active involvement in planning, conscientious observation of development actions, reflective consideration of outcomes and review/restructuring of beliefs and assumptions. It is commonly recognised that much of the knowledge development practitioners and experts in sustainable development hold is based on this

type of experiential learning. Having worked in many situations with multiple types of projects and observing their outcomes, practitioners become aware of many of the more subtle factors that facilitate a good planning process. It is less commonly recognised that this same learning cycle may be stimulated within a community in order to increase their awareness of development possibilities and their own capacity for managing their development. Nonetheless, many proponents of sustainable development now acknowledge that expanding common understanding of issues of sustainability and respect for the impacts our development practices have on the wider environment are primary necessities for moving towards more sustainable ways of living.

Thus, one of the main goals in reviewing the social process of planning sustainable development is to consider how it functions within the greater cycle of action/experiential learning that occurs when people actively participate in planning and development activities. The planning stages are identified as those activities that are important for establishing an agenda for sustainable development, but they are also presented as an iterative cycle that allows experiential learning to occur and thus effectively advance a community's own capacity for managing the planning process. Each stage and subsection serve both goals for establishing a holistic planning process and also for facilitating experiential learning. Bell and Morse suggest that many of the established models to assess the performance and outcomes of specific projects depend on linear and logical frameworks that produce unrealistic assumptions about projects resulting in the disruption of the potential for strong participation and forcing development activities into 'blue-print' models. They further suggest that if community and individual learning were regarded as important goals of any development project then this would aid in alleviating the narrowing views of project performance. In fact, experiential learning as a goal of project performance, 'is perfectly consistent with the notion of a project acting as a spark to providing a more enduring achievement' (Bell and Morse, 2005: 40-1).

## **8.2 Main Stages of Planning Sustainable Development**

Four main stages have been identified as part of the planning process: 1) Forming Common Ground and Envisioning the Future; 2) Planning Holistic Development; 3) Practicing Development; and 4) Monitoring and Evaluating Development. Each stage is also divided into multiple subsections (*see Table 4 at the end of this chapter*). While the subsections of the first stage are the only ones being presented as containing a third tier of categories, this is mainly because the first planning stage is often unrepresented in academic discussions and thus requires a more in depth elaboration than the following stages which are commonly presented and accepted in development and planning literature. It is important to reiterate that even though these separate parts of the planning process are presented as stages, it is acknowledged that the planning process takes on an iterative nature through reflexive learning cycles, and these steps are not one off activities. The term “stages” is still used to define these parts of the planning process because there remains a linear progression of steps to complete during the first cycle of the planning process, while in following cycles the nonlinear, iterative nature of the planning process is more apparent.

### **8.2.1 Forming Common Ground and Envisioning the Future-**

This first stage in the planning process can be described as a preliminary stage to the actual process, however within the context of an experiential learning cycle this stage is fundamental to establishing commonality among multiple stakeholders and ensuring that there is collaborative agreement on the objectives for undertaking such development. As part of a reflexive learning cycle rather than a linear process, it is at this stage where much of the reflection on direction and orientation take place. Thus, it is also at this stage where regular review and restructuring aids in development being planned in a responsive and proactive manner instead of a reactive or mechanical style. The main purpose of this stage is for communities to collectively define what their desired future is.

This stage is demarcated by three main phases. The first phase is *Assessing the current situation*, and it is about gaining an understanding of the environment in which development is to occur. The second phase is

*Creating vision* by identifying what are the main features of the community's desires for the future. The final phase is *Defining goals and priorities of development* that will provide the main guidelines for what development activities should achieve. These phases require both abstract and concrete thinking, while they work to create understandings that are both reductionist and holistic, objective and subjective in nature.

Before a community can rationally think about their future, it is important that they have a good appreciation for the conditions of their present reality. Furthermore, if a community is to work together in the planning process the fact that individual members have differing understandings of reality must be accounted for. This takes two separate steps—the first is assessment and appraisal of the characteristics of the local environment in order to distinguish those factors that have an influence on the current situation and the potential for development. This assessment should consider the features of both the natural and the built/ social environments. The second step is the community actually forming collaborative agreement on what those factors are. Following from this, there are two valuable learning features that can be distinguished. The first feature is one that actually starts to demonstrate to the people how the experiential learning cycle can be used. Through assessment and appraisal techniques, people gain confidence and skill in observing and reflecting upon the world around them. The second learning feature is concerned with forming a spirit of cooperation within the given community. While the later phases of this development stage require community members to work together to form agreement over their desires for the future, this phase requires agreement over the present situation. Because the present situation is more concrete and discussions about the future are often abstract, it is likely that forming agreement over the present situation is a much easier task than defining goals for the future. Community learning in establishing modes of cooperation and forming collaborative agreements provides lasting skills for later planning work.

The second and third phases are connected in that they are about the members of a community forming a union around the future they are collectively working towards. The type of discussions and thinking that



happen during these phases shift from idealistic to realistic. In the second phase, the goal is to establish what individuals desire for the future and from this formulate a common vision for the future. There are two valuable learning features that occur within this phase, again as in the previous phase one feature is important for the cycles of learning and planning and a second feature that is important for the spirit of cooperation. The first is concerned with idealistic thinking and brainstorming outside of what is normally considered possible. For sustainable development to meet many of the challenges it faces, the ability for creative and innovative thinking is necessary. The second learning feature focuses on the trade-offs between community/collective planning and individual planning. While working to define commonality on desires for the future, community members are challenged by the task of collective action while at the same time minimising disruption to individual autonomy. The learning of this balance is quite powerful in forming strong cooperation. If it does not exist and people feel manipulated by the planning process or as if they do not have control over where their future is headed, then their desires to participate in the process diminish rapidly.

The final phase focuses on framing the type of development to be planned by establishing clear objectives and guidelines. This requires reviewing the common vision for the future produced in the previous phase and from it drawing out those factors and features that are central in the advancing of said future. The main learning feature of this phase is promoted through the above activity. This feature is about movement from ideal scenarios to realistic scenarios or moving from abstract vision to concrete planning and activity. In the previous stage, community members consider their desired future, and in this phase they start to consider how they can make that future reality. This may appear truistic, however multiple people on Gigha explained how this transition from conceptualising the desired future to beginning to formulate plans that would actually lead towards this future was one of the more difficult challenges of the planning process. The identification of goals and priorities to guide development work may be seen as an in-between from creating a long-term vision for the community and planning specific development activities.

Catherine Breathnach explains in her work on communal learning that to create and share individual and communal knowledge requires a social networking, or communities of practice, approach. She further suggests that a common framework of understanding and a shared paradigm is necessary to engage in learning relationships. However, concern arises over the fragmented nature of relationships of interdependency in modern society. 'There is little integrating process enabling the development of shared analysis, language and strategic action to maximise the use of resources, problem solving and the creativity of individuals and communities. Furthermore, people are increasingly individualised and consumerised' (Breathnach, 2006: 7). The main learning goal for the overall first stage of *Forming Common Ground and Envisioning the Future* may be seen as working to establish this shared paradigm and common language through which discussion about development possibilities can occur in a cooperative manner. Participation in this first stage provides lessons that deal with both how to generate a reflective and action learning cycle as part of the planning process and how to create methods for collective action in planning which may be viewed as the maturing of a spirit of cooperation.

### 8.2.2 Planning Holistic Development-

The second stage in the planning process is sometimes identified as the sole stage of planning in the development literature. Especially when discussing sustainable development, it seems inappropriate to consider this the only stage of planning, but at the same time this is actually the sole stage with the goal to produce a development plan and detail the projects that are to occur. Five phases are identified as part of this stage: 1) *Defining main areas of focus*; 2) *Considering a wide variety of potential*; 3) *Refine possibilities based on circumstances*; 4) *Choosing projects/initiatives*; and 5) *Ensuring integration*. Each phase is marked by a further move from abstract consideration of the future towards concrete defining of the actions that support the formation of the desired future. The end goal, as mentioned above, is the production of a development plan that details the primary focuses of development activities and the specific projects to be undertaken.

To begin this stage, reference back to the development goals that were defined in the previous stage and also the identified factors that are influencing development is useful. Utilising these two pieces of information, it is possible to define the main areas of focus for the development plan. These can start as broad categories and vary greatly. On Gigha six key areas were defined: Freedom from Debt, Housing Strategy, Local Economy, Social Infrastructure, Agriculture and Sustainable Development. Working within each area of focus separately, a wide range of possibilities for development activities and projects may be considered. This is followed by refining these possibilities to realistic activities based on what is fitting given the assessment of local circumstances. Planning sustainable development is often balanced between this interplay of opening up and expanding conceived potential/opportunities and then narrowing and refining these possibilities to those that are appropriate in the given situation. One step is taken to expand what is considered and discussed often in a conceptual form, and the next step is taken to refine towards a realistic and concrete form. Once these widening and refining steps have occurred, the community members are able to confidently discern those projects and initiatives that are appropriate. As a list of projects covering the multiple areas of focus begins to form, it is important for these projects to be reviewed in regards to their holism and how well they interact with each other. It is also possible to refer back to the abstract vision for the future and compare that to the concrete development works planned to examine how well they correspond.

The most apparent learning feature ingrained in this stage of planning concerns the process of effecting change. This learning is based in the action of moving from abstract envisioning to concrete project planning. In order to accomplish this action, it requires an awareness of what can encourage desired changes and thus an awareness of those factors that influence development. There are many different types of factors that can influence the development process and depending on the identified areas of focus, community members select the factors which work to promote the types of changes desired. If the participation of community members in the development process is considered important, then they would look at factors such as decision-making structures, methods for input and the

potential roles that individual members can fulfill. In this case, the factors are mainly social/political. If communities were interested in establishing an adequate supply of drinking water, they would need to consider issues that are mainly physical in nature such as water sources, purification processes, patterns of consumption, disposal and treatment of wastewater. In other examples, factors may be economic, cultural, legal, environmental/biophysical, etc.; but just as the focuses for development planning are dependent on local circumstances, so are the factors that influence the development process. In a rural location, distance to markets may be a critical factor, while in urban areas dependency on imported resources may prove a main factor. However, this learning goes beyond just the ability to acknowledge what factors influence development and examines those actions that lead to enduring achievement.

Andriantiatsaholiniaina, et. al. (2004) have explicated many of the main features that effect change towards sustainability with the SAFE (Sustainable Assessment by Fuzzy Evaluation) model. Two primary components are depicted: Ecological Sustainability and Human Sustainability. Ecological Sustainability includes the secondary components: air quality, land integrity, water quality, and biodiversity. Human Sustainability includes the secondary components: political aspects, economic welfare, health, and education. Each of these eight secondary components are further evaluated using the Pressure-State-Response approach (*see Appendix E for a full review of the SAFE model*).

The SAFE model was developed as a means for coping with the fact that traditional mathematic and economic models are unable to explain planning for sustainable development because of its complex and often ambiguous nature. Instead, the SAFE model employs fuzzy logic and IF-THEN linguistic variables to begin to explain the interdependencies between the multiple factors/components in sustainable development. This model is based on the idea that formulating patterns between the various factors is not possible to a level of standardisation, rather it is necessary to consider the unique attributes of a given situation and to explain the particular relationships that take place at a specific time and place. Though the creation of this model was aimed at national-level policy making, the recognition of

the complicated nature of sustainable development and the attempts to explain how understanding can be gained through pattern recognition aids in highlighting the learning feature that individuals gain from *Planning Holistic Development*. In order to understand how to best effect change, individuals must begin to recognise those factors within their local environment that fulfill dynamic roles within the development process and to consider how these factors interrelate. Rather than standardising the focuses of sustainable development, each locale must be examined for subtle patterns of change that can create lasting and significant positive impacts within the development process. As work with sustainable development increases, it is likely that the list of components such as those suggested in the SAFE model will increase. However, this list only provides guidance to communities for which features are important to examine for significance and never an exact protocol.

### 8.2.3 Practicing Development-

The third stage is that of actually enacting the development projects and activities. This is the only stage when “real” change happens in some people’s opinion because this is when physical changes occur and are easily visible. However, hopefully the analysis of the planning process as a learning cycle provides an appreciation of the fact that there are many subtle and non-visible changes occurring throughout the cycle. In an attempt to ensure that the implementation of projects occurs in a high quality manner, three other phases to this stage are noted besides the actual implementation. They are: 1) *Creating a projects agenda*; 2) *Defining project stages and activities*; 3) *Providing proper management*; and finally 4) *Implementing development activities and projects*.

The first phase and the second phase can be taken together as the process of detailing the activities that will occur during any given development project. A high quality project agenda will define each activity that needs to occur, address the time scale in which it should occur, consider the allocation of necessary resources, and also discuss any mitigation activities that will need to occur. For many projects, especially ones that involve activities such as building and engineering it is unlikely that a

community will be able to entirely manage this stage on their own. Instead, it becomes more practical to contract such work to a professional who can insure quality implementation, and in such cases it would often be the role of the professional to detail a project agenda. However, when multiple projects are to occur over a short timescale, it becomes quite beneficial for community members to have some active part in defining the agenda because it is often the case that activities can be overlapped to meet the needs of multiple projects. If a community is to take full control of a given project, rather than outsourcing the work, it is important that proper management of the project is accounted for and that somebody within the community takes on such a management role. In some cases where expert management is needed, it is still possible for local individuals to be involved directly in the project works under the supervision of an outside manager. This itself can provide valuable learning opportunities for community members, and next time around they may be able to take on the management role.

An important learning feature that is apparent in this stage is that of balancing local control and management with the need for facilitation by professionals. Traditionally, once a project is conceived, all activities to secure its actual implementation are outsourced to a professional company. There are obvious reasons for needing to do this in many cases. However, where possible, the active participation of community members in project implementation is beneficial. This can encourage a sense of ownership, it can reduce overall project costs, and it can provide community members with further skills that become useful during later development planning. There are many examples that are apparent from Gigha.

The most 'romantic' of these is the weekend the local community, especially the school children, spent washing the blades for the reconditioned wind turbines that were erected days later by a professional company. This gave people a real sense of connection to the project and also provided a clear example of everyone pulling together to make their development happen. The same firm that erected the turbines also trained a local individual how to monitor the turbines, to collect readings and to take care of minor problems, thus regular care for the wind turbines does not depend on an outside professional traveling to Gigha.

A more conventional example is the commitment by the firms that were hired to complete the housing renovations over a six-year period to hire a few individuals from Gigha to work for them. Early on, it was hoped that a Gigha-based construction firm could be created to complete this work, however it was recognised that the amount of work was too extensive for a startup company to manage. This compromise between off-island professionals managing the current work while on-island individuals receive valuable training means that the work is completed to a high standard in the present, and in the future there will be members of the local community who will command the skills to manage general repairs.

This type of skill sharing was also discussed in Chapter Three in regards to facilitating consensus decision-making processes and the benefits that occur as more individuals receive training to facilitate consensus — another strong example of experiential learning where people perform better in the overall process due to their increased knowledge/skill set. All of these examples are strong ways to promote the long term sustainability of development activities by ensuring that the types of knowledge needed to manage and implement development planning continues and spreads among more people. In this manner, the learning feature of this cycle goes beyond merely recognising when professional facilitation is needed, and it extends to ensuring that the purpose of professional facilitation is not just the completion of a project's work but also the sharing of skills so the local community's capacity increases and overall dependency on outside professionals decreases.

#### **8.2.4 Monitoring and Evaluating Development-**

The fourth stage in the planning process is *Monitoring and Evaluating Development* and is concerned with reviewing the effects that development activities have and adapting the development process in accordance with these effects. This is important for ensuring a development process continues in a sustainable fashion over a long time period and for also encouraging timely, proactive planning through multiple cycles of the planning process. After the initial stage of formulating methods for monitoring and evaluation, this work becomes incorporated into the regular

activity of development process and continues without being recognised as an individual planning stage. Three main goals are identified for monitoring and evaluation: evaluating the level to which projects achieve desired goals, gaining further awareness of how specific projects effect change, and detecting looming problems before they become serious.

There are four main phases illustrated as the components of this planning stage: 1) *Assessing success of projects*; 2) *Utilising sustainability indicators*; 3) *Creating evaluation criteria*; and 4) *Ensuring adaptability*. Ensuring that development priorities and project goals are being achieved is important in all development. However, in regards to sustainable development such activity is imperative because the holistic nature of sustainable development often result in diverse sets of priorities. Furthermore, since much of this development is currently quite innovative, potential outcomes may be unknown. Phase two and three of this stage are two distinct programmes/tools that aid in monitoring and evaluating sustainable development (*see Chapter Seven for explanations of Indicators and Evaluation Criteria*). The final phase is concerned with guaranteeing that the long term potential for development is not compromised and that adaptability is ingrained into the planning process. The development process is reviewed to avoid over-dependence on a single factor and to promote a wide range of connections between various factors. As feedback from monitoring and evaluation is generated, it is reflexively brought back into the planning cycle for use in review and restructuring of the envisioned future and development plans.

Participation in this planning stage engenders three major learning features. The first two learning features work to deepen individuals' appreciation of the nature of sustainable development and the planning process. It was already discussed in regards to working with indicators, by distinguishing what would signify real achievement people become aware of the reality that development is a long term process and that lasting change towards sustainability requires many gradual steps. Furthermore, this stage provides a familiarity with the cyclical process of development. This is the point where most linear-style development planning would end, but in relation to a sustainable development planning cycle this is where lessons



from this round of planning are carried over into the next round so new planning can occur with better information and knowledge. This process of assessment and review also strengthens the valuable skills of observation and reflexivity. During the implementation of projects in the previous stage, people will have already observed the actual work of the development projects, but it is in this stage when they consider what types of effects the projects had. The knowledge they gain through this interplay of observing and reflecting can significantly aid the planning process during further cycles.

### **8.3 How to Design for Sustainability**

Now that the main stages of the planning process have been discussed, focus is turned towards designing for sustainability in the planning process and addressing the question what are guiding principles for doing such. Though it is accepted that the nature of sustainable development does not lend itself to the construction of blue-print models, it is assumed that from illustrations of best practice and increasing interaction with individual projects for sustainability that some formulation of guiding principles is viable. The view is taken here that the real purpose of such principles of sustainable development is not defining what types of projects are and are not sustainable, but rather to provide a framework of loose design and planning codes that ensure a range of projects designed under such a framework will produce sustainable outcomes. The establishment of clear design principles for sustainable development would aim for wide relevance and to support high quality planning across multiple contexts. At the same time, these principles would need to avoid the dogmatic detailing of specifics that would limit the adaptability of these principles to local circumstances.

From the planning process on Gigha, three separate sets of principles that aided in designing for sustainability are identified. These principles correspond nicely with the planning stages minus the *Practicing Development* stage, which could be described as the most straightforward of the stages in regards to mentally conceptualising it. From the first stage

*Envisioning the Future*, the goals and priorities of development are defined (discussed in Chapter Six). Two sets of principles were discussed in regards to the *Planning Development* stage on Gigha (in Chapter Five). Guiding principles for economic development were detailed originally in the *Gigha Development Plan*, and further principles that appeared embodied throughout the development plans were identified as being potentially applicable as general design principles. In the final *Monitoring and Evaluation* stage, the use of sustainability judgement criteria is discussed (in Chapter Seven).

The structuring of clear objectives for the development process through the definition of goals and priorities provides a substantial guiding feature for communities planning their development. However, unlike the idea of creating principles of design for sustainability that can be generalised for usage across multiple development projects, the creation of goals and priorities for development focuses specifically on the needs and desires of individual communities. Analysing the primary forces that are influencing development towards sustainability, both those that are positive and negative, facilitates the generation of these goals and priorities. From this, the community can identify those features that they want to encourage, those they want to protect, and those they want to limit. Gigha's goals and priorities provided significant guidance in the way several aspects of the development process were planned and structured following their formation. In this sense, the list of ten goals and priorities for development on Gigha may be viewed as a reference point or corner stone around which further development planning is structured. The board of directors for the Trust see the goals and priorities as a clear mandate from the wider community on how they should direct the development process. However, these goals and priorities do not specifically provide guidance about what types of activities encourage sustainable results.

The two sets of design principles discussed in Chapter Five provide the clearest example of the types of principles that have potential for becoming a more generalised set of design principles for sustainable development. There is some overlap between the two sets, as seen following:

**Principles for Economic Development**

- Synergy
- Diversity
- Control (over economic regeneration)
- Substitution of Imports
- Branding
- Value Added
- Niche and Premium Markets

**Design Principles**

- Synergy and Solvency
- Diversification
- Security and Infrastructure
- Appropriate Design
- Precautionary Principle
- Livelihoods
- Networking
- Exemplar Projects

In regards to the principles for economic development, a few of these are unlikely to be completely generalisable. Principles such as branding, value added, and niche markets are all laudable approaches but are unlikely to be appropriate for all situations. Furthermore, under current market systems it would be difficult for every community to pursue this course of action. However, if substitution of imports was held as a widely valued principle of sustainable development than the resulting reforms to the market system would be better equipped for the spread of these other principles.

The design principles, on the other hand, better represent the type of principles that provide guidance for designing and planning in a manner that encourages sustainable development but without actually specifying actions. This should be one of the main goals of a good set of principles for sustainable development — to provide a framework of values and standards that guides the ethos in which planning occurs. This in essence becomes a type of sustainability code. At the same time, the principles should avoid the trap of detailing specific actions or projects to undertake because this would significantly limit their general applicability. In Chapter Five, a few other values of sustainable development were noted as apparent on Gigha, however they were not listed as design principles because they influenced the ethos of development rather than the way it was being planned. It is appropriate to note them here though because the above list is presented not as complete or final but as a starting point for further discussion about what are the Design Principles for Sustainable Development. It is worth reflection, if blue-print models of development are not appropriate for sustainability, do design principles provide the cohesive type of understanding about what sustainable development entails that academics and practitioners alike can

form common agreement around. The other noted values from Gigha's planning process are stewardship, community participation, legacy for future generations, and 'sufficiency of sustenance'—enough for all without excess and wastefulness.

The idea of creating sustainability judgement criteria for assessing potential projects and business ventures on Gigha was discussed in the development plan. However, the creation of this criteria proved difficult for two reasons: defining what factors a project should be judged by and once defined setting up means to evaluate these factors while a project is still in a conceptual state. This is of course the nature of what is carried out in Environmental Impact Assessments and Social Impact Assessments, however these are both quite extensive processes that require multiple professionals, a lengthy amount of time and usually at a significant financial cost. Thus, in one way EIAs and SIAs could be described as unsustainable tools for community-led development processes. They are both quite worthwhile in a given context, unfortunately that context is not at the local level when community-led planning is a priority. If over time a list of design principles becomes more standardised, then it would be conceivable that evaluation criteria would be established around these principles—to assess how well the different principles are accounted for in the proposal.

Two potential measurements for evaluation that were briefly mentioned in Chapter Seven are worth reiterating. The first is concerned with moving away from the standard focus on economic growth in evaluation techniques. Instead it suggests that economic solvency provides a better understanding of the economical sustainability of a project. The focus is on how well the relationship between inputs and outputs is defined and functions—will an activity produce a self-maintaining cycle. Second is a consideration of the number of livelihoods that are supported through a given activity in relation to the natural resources consumed during that activity. If this measurement was regularly employed, a ratio could be established for both the average and an acceptable limit.

The hope in promoting a move towards a standardised set of design principles is that this may provide a basic definition for sustainable development that could receive common acceptance because such design

principles are potentially more universal than most features of sustainable development. Nonetheless, promoting such principles is not meant to suggest that they should outweigh other features of sustainable development. As mentioned above, the community defining of locally-contextualised goals and priorities for development also provide substantial guidance for that specific planning process. In fact, the valuable interplay between the locally-defined goals and priorities that provide clear objectives within a single development process and the standardized principles of design that provide an ethos of sustainability can enable both the uniqueness and rigor necessary for successful sustainable development planning.

#### **8.4 Sustainability and a New Conceptualisation of Social Progress**

In the previous chapter on Monitoring and Evaluation, a discussion of the differences between development and growth are presented. Furthermore, connection is suggested between both of these ideas and the concept of social progress. The popular meanings of all three of these concepts are significant to the framing of modernisation ideologies and have an important influence on the type of social change that is encouraged. For sustainable development to have a strong effect, it is necessary to expand the development discourse in general and more precisely to open questions concerned with reassessing what defines social progress.

The evolution of ideas concerning sustainable development may be viewed as diverging from previous development theories in the fact that sustainable development calls for a paradigm shift in our understanding of what progress entails. Modernisation development theory holds the achievement of high-consumption societies as its primary mark of progress and through this promotes exponential economic growth as a key tenet. Compare this to the most familiar definition of sustainable development, 'development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs' (WCED, 1987). These two divergent ideas of progress and development are at odds with each other in the fact that the high-consumption societies, embodied in Western countries, consume not only to meet their needs but also their

material desires at a rate that is rapidly compromising the ability of future generations to meet their basic needs. In this sense, sustainable development is not about altering current development models to improve them and make them better, rather sustainable development theory is about fundamentally transforming our understanding of progress and how we relate to the wider ecosystem we depend on for basic survival.

The new understanding of progress that is promoted in sustainable development carries with it a new means for measuring progress. Even the Bruntland commission touched on this in their definition of sustainable development with the idea “ability to meet their needs”. Other ways to phrase this would be as *potential (for development)* or even as *embodied energy*. Under this framework, leaving the next generation a world better than the one we live in now would be about increasing the potential for them to meet their needs, or in embodied energy terms leaving a natural ecosystem that is healthier and more abundant than the one we started with. In order to achieve this goal, the current generation would need to plant more trees than they cut down, provide more lasting organic matter to the soil than is eroded through agricultural practices, make the water and air cleaner—not dirtier. These are the types of activities that would leave the next generation with more ability to meet their needs and thus qualify as progress under the definition of sustainable development. Though slightly dramatic examples, these direct connections to the fact that humans are dependent on natural ecosystems to meet basic needs is a common acknowledgement in the sustainable development literature. In this fashion, sustainable resource extraction is referred to as a level of extraction that does not exceed the natural system’s ability to renew that resource. Static sustainability—with no development/progress, nor with decline—would thus be leaving the next generation with the same potential/embodied energy to meet their needs as this generation has. It naturally follows that sustainable progress may be defined as the next generation inheriting a world where there is more potential/embodied energy to meet their needs.

There are actually three beliefs within this concept that are important to acknowledge separately. The first is the recognition in sustainable development that as a species we are directly interconnected with the natural

ecosystem. Even more, the meeting of all our basic needs in some form or fashion comes from the wider ecosystem. Thus the second is that the ability to meet our needs depends fundamentally on the health of the ecosystem, and this capacity can be measured in the amount of existing embodied energy. The third belief is the change in the understanding of progress, that if sustainable development is about meeting needs without compromising others' ability to meet their needs then progress can be viewed as increases in the embodied energy in the ecosystem due to specific sustainable development practices. Contrasting to the tenet of the modernisation theory of development that promotes rapid material/resource consumption, one of the main tenets of sustainable development may be described as actively planning and enacting development to increase the health and potential (or the *biodiversity level*) of the natural ecosystem.

This redirection of the perception of social progress as promoted in sustainable development can be viewed as the primary feature of planning for sustainability that makes it unique from other theories of planning. However, there are also other notable features that distinguish planning sustainable development from other forms of planning and other development theories. The majority of features that are distinct relate more to this ethos that planning for sustainability is embodied in rather than the process steps of the planning cycle. The conceptualisation of sustainability through holistic systems thinking and the strong appreciation for the interconnectedness of various factors in development presents a prominent deviation from the rational, linear thinking that has dominated the majority of development discourses in recent history. From the realisation of this interconnectedness, the imperative for a focus on development issues that expands beyond an anthropocentric worldview was convened.

The design principles discussed above may be described as a guiding context for the application of this ethos within the planning cycle. These too stand out as distinct features of planning for sustainability from other common systems of planning that are not directed by a value system that may be referred to as ethical in nature. Within the process steps of planning sustainable development, there is an obvious heightened appreciation of the first and final development stages, *Forming Common Ground and*

*Envisioning the Future* and *Monitoring Development* respectively. The fact that in both stages no “real” development projects or activities are planned or implemented, but rather these stages are about ensuring the high quality of the “real” stages is significant. It is well acknowledged that planning sustainable development is a challenging task and that care must be taken for it to be applied appropriately, as explained through the precautionary principle. The resulting response to ensure that observation and reflection are both fundamental features of the planning process is also distinct. Finally, the growing respect for the experiential learning features of community-led sustainable development provides one of the most prominent vehicles for lasting change, and it is worth noting that it is within the first and final development stages that many of the really powerful learning features are actively engaged with.



<b>Table Five: Main Stages of Planning Sustainable Development</b>	
<b><u>Forming Common Ground and Envisioning the Future</u></b>	
1.	Assessing the current situation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking stock of the unique characteristics of the local environment (both natural and social)</li> <li>• Elaborating community assets and needs</li> <li>• Identifying forces and factors influencing development (both positive and negative)</li> </ul>
2.	Creating Vision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expressing desires for the future</li> <li>• Defining commonality (and identifying areas to remain under individual control)</li> <li>• Forming a long-term vision for the community</li> </ul>
3.	Defining goals and priorities of development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Framing purposes of development</li> <li>• Identifying goals and priorities to guide development work</li> </ul>
<b><u>Planning Holistic Development</u></b>	
1.	Defining main areas of focus
2.	Considering a wide variety of potential
3.	Refine possibilities based on circumstances
4.	Choosing projects/initiatives
5.	Ensuring integration
<b><u>Practicing Development</u></b>	
1.	Creating a projects agenda (if not clearly structured in development plan)
2.	Defining project stages and activities
3.	Providing proper management
4.	Implementing development activities and projects
<b><u>Monitoring and Evaluating Development</u></b>	
1.	Assessing success of projects
2.	Utilising sustainability indicators
3.	Creating evaluation criteria
4.	Ensuring adaptability

PART THREE

*FACILITATING COMMUNITY-LED  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT*

## **CHAPTER NINE-** **PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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Part One and Part Two of this work analyse the social processes that support the local planning and management of sustainable development initiatives. This analysis proposes community-led development as an important component of local-level sustainable development. It is suggested that this framework of local-level and community-led efforts towards securing sustainable development provides the type of active responsibility and ownership that is needed to encourage the affirmation of sustainability at a personal level. Within this archetype for sustainable development is an acknowledgement that the challenges raised by sustainable development are ones that require direct responses by individuals in their patterns of day-to-day living, thus a high priority is given to the knowledge-base and active capacity possessed by the average individual towards supporting sustainable development. One of the main questions being addressed through these previous sections is 'What are the main social processes that actively involve individuals in the wider development activities of their society, and in relation to this how is active responsibility and ownership encouraged?' However, two other questions also prevail throughout these sections, 'How is better knowledge of sustainable development and its component issues initiated into public discourse?' and 'How is a development process that encourages sustainable forms of development proliferated?'

It is in light of the later two questions, that Part Three investigates the subject of professional capacity in facilitating community-led sustainable development. Throughout the previous chapters it is argued that much of the 'uniqueness' presented in the ideas of sustainable development has as much to do with the types of definitions and understandings about human development activities that are advocated as it does with specific actions to be taken. It is argued that the ideas of active participation and decision-making, time-scales of planning development, the concept of social progress, and even the holistic appreciation for the multiple factors involved in a development process are all reframed under the sustainable development rhetoric, thus establishing a vastly different context from that presented

through the understandings of dominant development discourses such as the modernisation theory. One of the main questions that must be addressed in the following chapters is ‘How do professionals adapt to this changing context for development activities?’ If it is accepted that sustainable development presents a shift in theoretical understandings of development and social progress, then it is necessary to examine the framing ideologies that shape professional practice in development and analyse how well they support the objectives of sustainable development.

This chapter will discuss the capacity of development professionals and both the challenges and opportunities they face in facilitating sustainable development. It will further highlight the changing role for development professionals as stipulated by the evolving sustainability framework. In Chapter Ten, we examine the various roles that professionals play on Gigha and explore how they work to facilitate a community-led sustainable development process. In Chapter Eleven, the potential opportunities for furthering professional capacity in facilitating sustainable development and means for better translating sustainability theories into practice are examined.

## **9.1 The Sustainability Framework and New Definitions**

### ***9.1.1 Professional Roles in Sustainable Development-***

There are many types of professional roles that support the facilitation of sustainable development. It is important to classify these various positions in order to gain greater insight into the types of capacities professionals working with sustainable development hold. To these ends, it is possible to distinguish two main categorisations for professional roles in sustainable development. The first is based on the theory-policy-practice nexus (*to be discussed further within the following subject area*) and describes the level at which their work mainly influences. The second categorisation is the subject basis of the professional’s work. There are many titles that could be applied within this categorisation, several notable ones are: research/academic, political, scientific, technological, development practitioners, planning, economic, a broad category defined as project/activity specific, and finally whole systems/sustainability specialists.

First, it must be noted that neither of these categorisations provide clearly defined groupings but rather a spectrum of possibilities that an individual's work will likely overlap. Second, it is suggested that in conjunction these two categories provide a means for modelling the various professional capacities that influence the expansion and enhancement of sustainable development (*see Appendix F for an example of this model*). Though there are overlaps between working at different levels of influence, it is also clear that for the majority of subject areas few professionals work fully across the spectrum from theory to practice. Those who work with grander meta-narrative style descriptions of sustainable development seldom detail practical steps for implementing such development, and those who focus on micro-level sustainability projects often do not consider the wider systems framework of sustainable development. Furthermore, the field of professionals facilitating sustainable development is diverse, and influence at all levels comes from a wide background of disciplines. The multifaceted nature of sustainable development is one of its valuable characteristics, however it also proves a substantial challenge for any one person trying to gain a full understanding of the whole systems approach of sustainable development.

From this understanding of the diverse professions involved in the facilitation of sustainable development, it is possible to analyse how the sustainability framework actually operates. Sustainable development is considered a relatively new idea, however if we examine the concepts that are presented as part of sustainable development it is possible to recognise that many of these concepts are actually older than the defining and popularising of sustainable development itself. Whether these are ideas about ecological economics, participatory planning, renewable energy, or social equality within development, the interesting fact is that though all of these are directly ingrained in the sustainability rhetoric they had their founding prior to and outside of the defining of sustainable development. In this manner, one can talk about renewable energy or participatory planning without it specifically referring to a type of development that would be sustainable. However, the opposite is not true, if one is referring to

sustainable development then it inherently encapsulates these earlier concepts. It is thus possible to acknowledge the role sustainable development plays as a greater framework that encapsulates many other concepts about ecology and society.

### 9.1.2 The Importance of Sustainability as a Framework-

The idea of sustainability as a framework is presented here in an attempt to draw light to how ideas and theories of sustainable development are fashioned and how they effect concepts of development in general. One of the main benefits of sustainable development rhetoric is its thematic presentation of a pathway for social development and progress that challenges prevailing meta-narratives of development possibilities. This thematic presentation provides an analytical lens to examine development activities by. Furthermore, it provides a context for a potential projection of development through which several ideas and techniques about social justice and ecological quality find meaningful application. This ability to unify multiple concepts within one thematic approach to social development demonstrates the benefit of sustainability employed as a framework.

The concept of sustainable development has advanced significantly both in understanding and awareness over the twenty years since its original designation. There still remains debate about the “correct” definition for sustainable development. However, the fact that one no longer needs to substantiate every given discussion of sustainable development with a long assessment of the various definitions represents a growing acceptance for a common, though not concretely defined, understanding of the concept. Also, now there are dedicated academic journals to the subject of sustainable development that provide an arena where authors can widen the surrounding discourse on the subject without having to spend extensive time first justifying and defending it. Though it is still possible to find people using sustainable development under a “weak/ technocratic definition”, this has lessened significantly in recent years. Furthermore, there is a growing advocacy behind the idea that sustainable development represents a fundamental divide away from the modernisation discourse of development.

It has been suggested that the real power of sustainability is not in the corpus of its definition but rather in the surrounding discourses it engenders (Becker, et.al., 1999 and Redclift, 2005). Interestingly, sustainable development's evolution as a counter proposal to modernisation theory meant that it was presented as one possible model/ approach to development, albeit as a better one but still as one proposal among many that society can choose to regard or reject. This may be contrasted to the way modernisation theory is argued with the idea that there is an evolutionary end-state to human societies in the model of the high-consumption nation state that is generated through economic growth. Much of the original challenge faced by the proponents of sustainable development was not the actual defining of the concept but rather finding some legitimate ground to stand upon that demonstrated the concept as a valid and relevant approach to development during a period when others were claiming absolute victory for the modernisation agenda. Before sustainable development could progress, it had to demonstrate that history had not ended and in fact social evolution is not preordained but a human controlled process. Thus, sustainable development established a discourse around both opportunities and responsibilities.

Sustainability, even though a specific definition may not be agreed upon, heralds a new guiding ideal for what society's future could be – an ideal that the needs of all the world's population can be met in the present and into perpetuity by developing in a careful and planned fashion that will limit harm to the natural environment's capacity and strengthen supportive social systems. However, the main challenge for sustainability is no longer establishing the conceptual proof that this ideal is possible but rather to provide the means to design and implement the types of changes that will allow society to move in the direction of this ideal. And it is also in regards to this challenge that the concept of sustainable development still faces high levels of discordant views. It is often stated that, 'To meet even modest environmental goals requires significant changes in human behaviour' (Redclift, 1999: 74). However, it is difficult to find sincere discussions in academic literature or in policy about how such changes will be practically implemented.

Until recently, the majority of practical steps presented as fundamental to sustainable development were borrowed and brought together from adjoining disciplines. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, these are ideas that function individually separate from sustainable development but are inherently integral to the sustainability framework. Another important aspect to recognise is that though the sustainability framework aims for an interdisciplinary, whole systems approach, the majority of professionals currently working with sustainable development were trained under specific disciplinary discourses and methodologies. For many of these professionals, they continue to work with sustainable development only in that subsection which is akin to their own disciplinary backgrounds. This does not discredit the quality of their work, but it does present a challenge for compiling the often-disparate pieces into a whole systems approach to sustainable development. More than this, among the diverse range of professionals working within the sustainability framework there are certain boundaries of division that make knowledge transfer difficult, i.e. the natural science/technology versus social planning/development divide and the theory versus practice divide.

Though sustainable development theories depend heavily on borrowing ideas and outsourcing research to adjoining fields/disciplines, this same fact highlights sustainability employed as a framework. Why have so many professionals from diverse backgrounds gathered to work under the sustainable development banner, and why was it not ecological economics, participatory planning or renewable energy that became the lasting framework that pulled the adjacent pieces together? It is unlikely that the answer lies in the types of practices or methodologies that sustainability models because these are still in a preliminary stage. It is more likely that the answer is directly connected to the ideal state that sustainability conjures in the imagination – the image of a world where all of the human population lives happily, meeting all of their needs through a harmonious relationship with the natural world that is secured eternally. This may be criticised as an unrealistic and overly romantic notion, but this is the rhetorical power of sustainability to conjure up such an image.



Sustainability, of course, provides more than just an ideal – it provides a broad outline of the guiding structure that will lead us in the direction of more sustainable development. Furthermore, sustainable development provides a theory of development that speaks about opportunities and responsibilities suggesting that the creation of a better social and natural world is a human project that we are directly involved in. The liberating power of this deviation from models of development that speak about an evolutionary, predetermined or God-given system has subtle but important effects that should not be underestimated.

For sustainable development to move forward beyond its ideal state, it is in the outlining of its guiding structure where further work is critically needed. The sustainability framework clearly presents a difference in view and orientation from previous theories of development, but more substance must be incorporated into the practical dimensions of sustainable development for the goal of sustainability to have realistic meaning. Campbell provides a concise review of the basic outline of the sustainability framework:

[S]ustainability can be a helpful concept in that it posits the long-term planning goal of a social-environmental system in balance. It is a unifying concept, enormously appealing to the imagination, that brings together many different environmental concerns under one overarching value. It defines a set of social priorities and articulates how society values the economy, the environment, and equity (Campbell, internet: 1996).

Furthermore, the sustainability framework provides several objectives that are fundamental to the larger goal of sustainable development such as a fair distribution of resources to all of society, a strong social infrastructure that enables local capacities for managing development, a harmonious relationship with the natural world, and usage of natural resources at a level that does not overreach the natural environment's regenerative abilities. There may not be one clear and concise definition of sustainable development, but by utilising these objectives as requirements of what sustainable development must entail we can formulate a complex and comprehensive definition. Beyond this, we also have the foundation pieces of an outline on how to achieve sustainable development.

The challenge of advancing on from this rudimentary level of outline is an onerous task though because there is a conflict between detailing more precisely the inner workings of sustainable development on one hand and limiting the potential opportunities by narrowing its applicability on the other hand. A corresponding challenge is acknowledged in the recognition that much of sustainable development contradicts the practices favored under theories of development that have dominated discourses over recent history. '[S]ustainable development's most radical policy message requires a wholesale rethink of the development project as it demands a more humane, people-centred, ecological and localized economy' (Chatterton, 2002: 559). To outline this type of reorientation of society is daunting. However, much of this is caused by the disassociation between the present, "unsustainable" society and the ideal future, sustainable society. Instead of focusing on the future, desired ideal and trying to detail how we can develop towards this unknown, it is a more practical approach to deal with our present, neutrally valued society and consider how our development efforts lead us in a more sustainable direction that is not specifically based on any projected end. Actual movement in this direction may occur slowly through small, carefully chosen development actions, rather than the radical changes that seem necessary when focusing on the gap between the present and the ideal scenario. It is from this position, focusing on the present reality and how society can develop in ways that facilitate becoming more sustainable, that professional capacities in sustainable development are examined.

## **9.2 Development Professionals and the Theory-Policy-Practice Nexus**

'In the battle of big public ideas, sustainability has won: the task of the coming years is simply to work out the details, and to narrow the gap between its theory and practice' (Campbell, internet: 1996).

It is easy to think that the problematic deficiency for sustainable development is a deficiency in common understanding. However, it is argued above that there is actually a substantial understanding about what defines sustainability and sustainable development. In fact, since many of the ideas and concepts contained within the sustainability framework have been borrowed from earlier work in adjacent disciplines there is a relatively

high level of understanding about the theoretical components of what defines sustainability. There is a second deficiency within the sustainable development discourse that remains a larger stumbling block for its achievement: this can be labeled a *deficiency in application*. By deficiency in application it is meant that the practical means and methods for completing development activities that promote sustainability are neither clear nor commonly employed. To better understand this, it is necessary to investigate the theory-policy-practice nexus that exists in regards to sustainable development and how professionals operate within this nexus.

Modern nation-state models provide a powerful arena for affecting social change and sustainable development through the policy and planning system. This has resulted in a predictable focus within academia on applying theories of sustainable development to the level of policy and planning. In relation to policy, sustainable development gained its first stronghold within the context of international policy as seen with the United Nations' convening of the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1983, the resulting production of the Brundtland Report in 1987, and the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. It was Agenda 21, revealed at the Earth Summit, which prompted a substantial influence for sustainable development theory at the level of national policy. By 1996, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada had produced *The Local Agenda 21 Planning Guide* that introduced how a general sustainable development planning approach could be applied in local and regional level policies. This guide was based on the best practice of fourteen 'model communities' (local municipalities) that established LA21s following the Earth Summit. In the United Kingdom, some local authorities began to establish local agenda 21 strategies on their own accord. However, it was not until the publishing of *Sustainable Local Communities for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Why and how to prepare an effective Local Agenda 21 strategy* by the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions in 1998 that the national government really made a clear statement on the need for all local authorities to produce local agenda 21 strategies.

Local Agenda 21 strategies are publicised as one of the main methods to ensure that policy has direct effects towards promoting sustainable development. However, it has been criticised that in UK the promotion of LA21 strategies allowed the national government to promote sustainable development in rhetoric but at the same time avoid taking any of the relevant steps in policy that would actually support this. 'Central Government is avoiding responsibility for action on the environment by placing duties on local Councils without the powers to achieve them...The result is a "*green gap*" between national rhetoric on sustainable development and what happens in practice' (Friends of the Earth, internet: 23 Nov 1998). There are actually many success stories from local agenda 21 initiatives. Many local authorities employed concepts of sustainable development to reassess the subjects they dealt with through planning and to consider in more depth the types of outcomes and impacts development activities have.

At present, the uptake of sustainable development in the policy system appears substantial. Authorities are implementing sustainable development plans at all policy levels and across multiple development dimensions. There are still multiple critics of the government's sustainable development policies that consider it merely rhetorical, but for this analysis it is more appropriate to view the rapid growth in sustainable development policies as a legitimate commitment by the government towards sustainability. And if the government is committed, what we need to analyse is why these policies are not leading to the implementation of practices of sustainable development to the extent discussed in policy. The key judgment criteria for sustainable development at the end day remains what is actuated and transpires in practice, 'at its core, strong sustainability is a concept which is defined through practice rather than policy' (Chatterton, 2002: 559). John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister emulated this in his statement,

Local authorities have built up expertise on sustainable development through preparing local agenda 21 strategies. That is a good foundation for community planning... But a strategy is just the start. The hard work comes with making sustainable development into a reality -- helping all staff to understand how to apply sustainable development principles to their work, reviewing policies and continuing the steady work of raising awareness (January 2000 cited in Hughes, 2000: 23).

When one starts to analyse the divide between policy and practice, it is possible to appreciate that there is currently significant difficulty in translating sustainable development theories into practical achievements through the policy system.

To better understand the deficiency in application as it occurs between moving from policy to practice, it is necessary to briefly examine how the planning system operates. Government-managed planning is expounded as the main approach for insuring that development policies are initiated in the practice of development activities. The planning system throughout the United Kingdom operates with a high level of similarity and for the sake of this brief discussion will be treated as congruent. However, since devolution Scotland maintains its own planning system, policies and guidelines. The Westminster Parliament retains several reserved powers that have an effect on the policy and planning systems in Scotland; the most significant of these reserved powers with respective ability for pursuing sustainable development are the control of fiscal and economic policy and energy production. The UK government and the devolved administrations released a common strategic framework for sustainable development in March 2005 titled *One Future - Different Paths*, this corresponded with the release of the government's new strategy for sustainable development *Securing the Future*. The Scottish Executive responded in following with the detailed vision for a sustainable Scotland in *Choosing our future: Scotland's sustainable development strategy* (December 2005).

The planning system in the UK is directed from the national level through documents such as those listed above. At the national level, the broad vision, strategy and objectives for the planning process are outlined. Direct decision-making in regards to specific development projects though takes place at a local level. With guidance from the national government, local councils are charged with the direct structuring of long-term development plans. The Scottish Executive provides guidance to local councils through the production of *National Planning Policy Guidelines* (being replaced by *Scottish Planning Policy*) and *Planning Advice Notes*, and they view their role as four-fold:

- maintaining and developing the law on planning
- giving policy guidance and advice
- approving structure plans
- making decisions on some major planning applications and all appeals (Scottish Executive, internet: January 2001).

Planning decisions and the granting of planning permission is controlled by local councils and is based on their development plans: composed of structure plans which are strategic land use plans that envisage demands over a ten-year period and local plans which are specific planning regulations for a five-year period.

Argyll and Bute council, the local council that the Isle of Gigha is within, expresses a strong desire to encourage and support sustainable development in its development plan. In the *Argyll and Bute Local Plan* (June 2006), it is stated that the plan is framed by the Executive's objectives: to set the land use framework for promoting sustainable economic development; to encourage and support regeneration; and to maintain and enhance the quality of the natural heritage and built environment (as detailed in *Scottish Planning Policy No.1*, November 2002: 2). The *Local Plan* furthers this by detailing a series of combined economic/ social objectives and environmental objectives. Corresponding with this, they present four principles for sustainable development:

- *The win/win principle*: considering the short- and long-term from the outset and favouring the most sustainable option; this entails safeguarding and adding value to economies AND the environment
- *The biodiversity maintenance principle*: reinforcing habitats and variety of life allied to the local biodiversity action plan and partnership process
- *The precautionary principle*: based on prudent avoidance and risk assessment
- *The polluter pays principle*: based on natural justice and effective enforcement (June 2006: 4).

Finally, in relation to sustainable development, the council provides a Sustainability Checklist (*presented in Appendix G*) for people applying for planning permission to consider the impacts of their proposed project on the community, economy, environment and the future. Following on from these broad objectives and development principles, the *Local Plan* details a lengthy series of seventy policies that structures the actual physical reality for development that is possible (policies divided as 24- Environmental, 21-

Economic, 6- Housing, 12- Service, Transport, Access & Parking, 4- Recreation and Community, and 3- Planning Gain, Enforcement and Departure).

The policies that are detailed in local plans play the most direct role in establishing how development occurs. The parallel documents produced at a national level play an important role in framing what types of policies are acceptable and are produced, but these broad objectives need linked with local circumstances through councils' production of development plans to provide a functional planning system. The policies of the *Argyll and Bute Local Plan*, as is similar with the mainstay of local plans, are established on a system of land usage. These policies specify where what types of development are allowed through the zoning of certain types of land usage in the structure plan and then detailing the practices of acceptable development activities. It is suggested that the functioning of this planning system encourages best practice in development activities. However, a more fitting suggestion might be that the planning system is able to negate against development activities that are deemed harmful, or to discourage bad practice.

There is little real evidence that the planning system functions with a capacity to encourage best practice. The only method through which a regulatory-based planning system could fully advocate best practice in development activities would be to completely limit all development possibilities to those that are considered best practice in a command-and-control format. Under the current system, as long as a planning proposal does not clearly contradict the set policy or proposes harmful activities it will most likely receive planning permission. The reality thus is that most development activities that receive planning permission fall into a large grey area between best practice and bad practice. This critique is not aimed at the set policies themselves, as mentioned above they do function with a respectable level of success at negating activities that would have harmful impacts. Rather this critique is presented to draw light to the fact that the planning system—currently the main governmental tool for influencing how development shapes change—only has a limited capacity in producing sustainable development.

Several issues must be addressed within the planning system to acknowledge the difficulties it faces in supporting sustainable development. There are three connected factors that shape extensively how the planning system functions: its regulatory control, the basis on land usage, and a strong natural science bias. The planning system uses a series of regulatory policies to shape what type of development is possible, thus as already mentioned there is little actual ability to promote best practice through this system. It is beyond the bounds of this discussion to fully discuss the pros and cons of the regulatory approach to policy making, however the basic tenet of the argument is that a system that punishes bad behaviour inherently must focus on negative practices. Such a system may be successful in discouraging and even fully negating activities with harmful impacts, but this is a highly different approach from providing incentives and rewards for development activities that are considered best practice. The growth in the government's system of providing grants for renewable energy development and energy reduction measures in home refurbishment demonstrate examples of positive reinforcement for promoting sustainable development. Even provision of social infrastructures such as recycling centres and cycle lanes work to encourage better behaviours. It remains necessary to insure that harmful development activities are regulated against, but more balance and direct connection between this approach and the incentives approach for positive reinforcement is already demonstrating impressive results.

The planning system's basis on land usage and its bias towards natural science are significant in shaping the concentration of policy away from issues of social development. At a theoretical level, much of the focus of sustainable development is about social activities: concerns with equity, the operation of the economy, livelihood security, the usage of natural resources, etc. These same social objectives for sustainable development are stated at a national level in the policy framing documents, however they are lost in translation into direct planning policy at a local level due to the application of a natural science guided, land usage model. Take for example an application for planning permission to establish a new business— the current planning system would zone where economic activities may occur,



but it cannot take into consideration how well a venture would strengthen the local economy. This planning policy does not distinguish a corporate chain whose profits would leave the local economy from a family-owned business who would likely reinvest in the local economy. Neither is it possible for the planning system to consider if this business will depend on locally generated, renewable resources or limited resources shipped from overseas. The usage of technocratic approaches to policy formation is widespread throughout modern governments. These approaches were promoted as a means to contradict the failures of earlier value-laden approaches to urban planning and social reform by providing a rational method for planning that effectively depoliticised the process. However, proponents of a post-empiricist model for policy making argue, '[D]epoliticisation is seen to threaten modern government with a destabilising legitimacy crisis created by the inability of elite decision-makers to adequately address the interests and needs of the larger citizenry' (Fischer, 2003: 36).

Modern planning theorists are often apt to criticise the positivist tradition that framed the planning methodologies still in common use. Healey signals this call for a redirection in planning theory in her work *Collaborative Planning*:

[P]lanning processes need to work in ways which interrelate technical and experiential knowledge and reasoning, which can cope with a rich array of values, penetrating all aspects of the activity, and which involve active collaboration between experts and officials in governance agencies and all those with a claim for attention arising from the experience of co-existence in shared places (1997: 87).

Reform of planning theory and policy to incorporate more social strategies would strengthen the capacity of the planning system to produce sustainable development. This is not suggesting that the knowledge provided by natural sciences is unimportant to planning. In fact, there are really positive examples of knowledge about natural systems underpinning good development activities. The Forestry Commission's work with Wildlife Habitat Networks (Fowler and Stiven, 2003) has led to development activities that strengthen biodiversity and Scottish Power's commitment to land and habitat management has led to several ecosystem improvements including

new breeding grounds for golden eagles (McMillan, 9 July 2002). Since sustainable development is concerned with human activities occurring in a manner that is harmonious with the natural environment, it is fundamental that there is a foundation of understanding about natural systems. However, since sustainable development is essentially concerned with human activities, it is also necessary that there is more analysis given to meeting social needs and objectives within planning for sustainable development.

Finally, some critics of the current planning system express concern over the fact that in policy sustainable development continues to be treated more often as an add-on rather than as a central motif (Chatterton, 2002: 559). This critique is aimed at an ontological level in that those who argue such believe that the analytical/operational framework presented in sustainable development is its unique feature rather than individual policies that encourage specific activities. Thus, it does not critique the level of commitment a government demonstrates for sustainable development based on the number of policies it advocates, but rather it addresses the knowledge frameworks that structure the entire format through which the policy system is understood, analysed and operated. It is easy to point to the separation of departments in the government, the conflicting nature of some policies, and even the language used in policy documents to demonstrate that the policy/planning system does not function with the type of whole systems thinking that sustainable development promotes. But, it has already been suggested that at a theoretical level this still remains the same in terms of how individual professionals work with sustainable development theory from disparate disciplinary backgrounds. Overall, this critique that sustainable development is not embraced as a central motif within the policy/planning system used to reform and restructure the operational capacity of the system is quite relevant to bear in mind. Though it is also muted significantly by the fact that this type of reform and restructuring of wider social systems based on sustainability as an operational motif is absent in almost any real-world example.

### **9.3 The Meso Level: Designing and Planning Sustainable Development**

The previous subject area began by labeling the *deficiency in application* that currently exists in sustainable development. To present this, the theory-policy-practice nexus and how it corresponds with the planning system are detailed. Within academia, much theoretical work around sustainability is dedicated to how it is best translated into policy, and there exists a general belief that if theory is applied to policy then we will be on our way to achieving real-world results for sustainable development. However, the previous analysis suggested that the policy and planning system has only a weak capacity in influencing development that is truly sustainable and will lead to the significant types of social changes that are needed. Ironically, there also occurs a range of practical work for sustainability, usually as small-scale and one-off projects, which prove successful for the practice of sustainable development but seldom have influence at the theory level.

These issues are better understood by examining the current functioning of the planning system, which is guided by “best practice, blueprint” policies that stifle the designing of locally relevant projects. Further, it is a system based on regulating against development activities that would have negative, undesirable impacts, thus there is little ability to actively encourage projects that strongly support sustainable development objectives. Finally, the idea of an operational motif of sustainable development was mentioned, and it was suggested that though the sustainability framework presents a unique discourse about development and a specific analytical/ knowledge system it has not actually resulted in a reform of thinking/ learning systems in practice.

Another lens of analysis is available by classifying the meta-meso-micro levels of sustainable development. This categorisation strongly parallels the theory-policy-practice nexus in sustainable development, but does not indicate an exact equivalent. Meta-level sustainable development would include both the philosophical and theoretical understandings that form the basis of what defines sustainable development. The defining

philosophy of sustainable development is its meaning, purpose and vision—the idea that sustainable development is meeting the current population's needs with a high level of social equity in a manner that does not harm the health of the natural world or compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The defining theory of sustainable development is the operational motif it presents. This is the whole-systems thinking that views social and natural systems functioning in an interdependent manner and being directly influenced by human development activities. Micro-level sustainable development would include all the individual activities that occur in physical reality that support sustainable development. At a micro-level there is an extensive amount of variation, including: renewable energy technologies, participatory methods of decision-making, planning-for-real procedures, the use of sustainability indicators, green building techniques and local economic systems.

The meso-level of sustainable development is a trickier concept to define. Meso, the middle ground, suggests that there must be something that draws a link between what is defined at a theoretical and philosophical level and what occurs in action through individual projects and activities. Often, the meso-level is considered the place of government and policy where theory is applied through policy and planning to effect change for the benefits of the citizenry. However, acknowledgement of the common deficiency in application that exists for promoting sustainable development obliges a better analysis of how meso-level sustainable development does function and possible routes for improving its faculty.

Let us begin by cursorily defining the functioning of meso-level sustainable development as those processes that facilitate the translation of meta-understandings of sustainability into practical projects and activities that encourage and maintain sustainable development. This definition is considered cursory in order to avoid specifying what these specific processes entail prior to a proper investigation of the functioning and performance of the meso-level. To provide a proper examination of meso-level sustainable development, it is necessary to separate from the defining of meta-meso-micro levels based on institutional sectors or actors (i.e. meta- academia, meso- government, and micro- citizenry) as has occurred in the past.

Instead, the defining of these levels based on their relative operational capacities within sustainable development emerges as a more valuable analytical lens.

What must be considered in respect to meso-level sustainable development is how theory is employed to plan and design specific development activities that succeed in progressing towards the long-term objectives of sustainability. The government's policy and planning system does provide one good example of an arena for this type of work, but it definitely is not the only system that supports this. Techniques for ecological building could be seen as a system for supporting the design and construction of a built environment that supports sustainable development. Ecosystem management is evolving into a strong system that directs human activities in a manner that strengthens the surrounding natural environment. Finally, education for sustainability and eco-citizenship provides a means of influencing human behaviours and practices in a way that encourages sustainability.

One of the main issues that still influences the deficiency in application that the meso-level analysis elucidates is the weakness of current systems that support the planning of sustainable development to relate the system's techniques and skills directly to a strong awareness of the local natural and built/social environments. As already discussed in regards to the policy and planning system, these systems continue to depend on guidance that is based on best practice and blue print models. This results in the adverse outcome of stifling locally specific projects. Interestingly, the usage of best practice models demonstrate the high level of influence and dependency on understanding generated at the micro-level of sustainable development within the meso-level rather than knowledge generated at the meta-level. Best practice models are based on the reapplication of techniques that have proved successful in one development scenario onto further development scenarios, often regardless of any real analysis of locally specific circumstances. Even in ecosystem management, which provides one of the strongest systems for analysing local environmental conditions, the actual application of projects and activities often comes from this same practice of duplicating previously successful projects.

A second visible difficulty for achieving high quality performance at the meso-level of sustainable development is the challenge of predicting the cross-sector outcomes and impacts of development activities. Scientific knowledge established valuable methods for assessing potential environmental impacts of development activities as embodied in environmental impact assessments, however these assessment methods are still used to prevent potentially damaging impacts rather than to facilitate the design of activities that have significant long-term beneficial impacts on the environment. The usage of “impact” itself has a negative connotation within EIAs and concerns the avoidance and mitigation of such impacts. The Sustainable Development Commission provides a good discussion of how the planning system could be reformed to increase its capacity for achieving sustainable development in their response to the UK Government’s Green Paper *Planning: Delivering a Fundamental Change*:

For planning obligation to be one means of effectively delivering sustainable outcomes, we need to create a framework within which the social, economic and environmental impacts of development can be assessed. This should not only be looking at trade-offs, but also positive outcomes and synergies. This will require new techniques for assessing and calculating the longer-term impacts of development (1 March 2002: 7-8).

Though there are valuable means of assessing environmental impacts, methods for assessing the social impacts of development activities are more vague and unreliable. One of the challenges in analysing social impacts is the rationalising of a value judgment for a given social impact. It is also less clear what specifically denotes a negative or positive impact within the social sector than it is within the environmental sector.

Social impact assessments often assume a linear progression of project outcomes and impacts. This is now less the case with environmental impact assessment because it was revised through a long history of producing unforeseen and add-on consequences to recognise that activities that deal with one specific element within an ecosystem will result in multiple impacts throughout the entire system. Bell and Morse suggest, ‘Planning frameworks set out a clear progression from an ultimate strategic goal and set of purposes down to a tactical set of outputs and activities to generate the overall project outputs... However, there are often problems with this logical progression in practice’ (internet: 29 August 2006). Further research is

needed to gain better understanding for assessing the types of impacts that development activities have, this is especially the case in regards to impacts on the social sector. However, in order for this research to be meaningful, it is first necessary to better classify what types of changes within the social sector actually support achieving sustainable development and consider what should be positively valued.

There are two major paths for improving sustainable development at the meso-level, ironically they have contradictory natures. The first path is the furthering of a design and planning system that details a series of general principles for sustainable development that guides the structuring of development programmes and activities through an approach that ensures positive outcomes. The second path is concerned with increasing capabilities for appraising the circumstances of a specific local environment in order to implement unique development strategies based on an appreciation of the distinctive situation and setting. The first path is one of generalisation with a strong influence from meta-level understandings, the second is a path of specialisation influenced from micro-level understandings.

Both of these paths are important for producing better methods for achieving sustainable development, but their conflicting nature may be seen as a substantial challenge for the advancement of the entire field. It is at the meso-level of sustainable development where further research and innovation may provide a model for the coordination of these two pathways. At the meta-level, the theories of sustainable development remain too general to provide the methods to directly account for local circumstances and to make it specifically applicable to individual scenarios. While at a micro-level, too often projects that are classified as best practice still have little influence on, or even from, theory. At the meso-level, there are three steps that must be addressed in parallel. First, is it possible to establish a series of general principles for designing sustainable development that furthers an ethos through which development programmes are planned? Fundamental to this step is also avoiding a strategy that attempts to detail a blue-print, stage-by-stage plan for sustainable development since this would limit and narrow its relevant applicability. Second, is it possible to formulate methods for appraisal and assessment that provide a detailed account of

local circumstances? This local appraisal must provide an understanding about what types of development activities are needed and appropriate. Third, is it possible to relate the theory to the physical reality? This is the real functional opus of the meso-level: can locally specific development be planned directed by a theory-based design system?

It was suggested that these three steps need to be addressed in parallel, however it may be more appropriate to consider how these three issues may be addressed through one process. In this sense, the issue could be presented as the formation of a design system that focuses on taking account of local circumstances and working with them to plan a development process that would enhance the local environment that is grounded in a whole-systems, long-term understanding of development activities and impacts. For example, if a main objective of a design system was to establish a social infrastructure that enables local managing of long-term development then design guidance would frame sustainable development in a way that is about strengthening local capacities and increasing the ability of people to meet their needs. And hopefully the employment of such an approach would strengthen the overall guidance for producing sustainable development while at the same time heighten the relevant local applicability of the guidance.

#### **9.4 Changing role for Development Practitioners**

The mainstay of the following chapters in Part Three address the capacities of professionals working with sustainable development to effect the meaningful changes that the idea of sustainability encapsulates. Just as sustainable development itself presents a fundamental change in the way development is understood, it also presents a change in concepts about the role of development practitioners and those working in a professional capacity to facilitate sustainable development. Both the theory-policy-practice and the meta-meso-micro categorisations are applied as analytical lenses. Attention is especially paid to examination of the capacities of professionals to further establish a strong meso-level understanding of sustainable development. This final subject area will provide a brief overview of some of the changes in the roles of development practitioners



that are already occurring. Chapter Ten examines the work of development professionals on Gigha through these analytical lenses; and in Chapter Eleven the potential for increasing the capacities of development professionals and the ability to strengthen meso-level sustainable development is discussed.

The evolving participatory paradigm in the development field is an important example of the changing role for development practitioners that is occurring. One of the significant reasons for the rise in participation is the recognition of the ability of indigenous knowledge systems and the understandings generated by people who are connected to the local environment to provide high-quality appraisals of local circumstances and in determining the types of development activities that are relevant to these conditions. A second, more recent shift that is happening in regards to participation is its use as a means for supporting experiential learning and increasing local capacities for the long-term management of the development process. Within these shifting concepts of participation, it is given a meaning that is distinctly different to consultation. It is thus argued that participation requires active involvement of local people in both decision-making and managing the development process, and that it should not be merely an abstraction of their knowledge so professionals can make well-informed decisions.

Robert Chambers details a strong analysis of the changing roles for development practitioners with focus on the rise in the participatory framework in *Challenging the Professions* (1993). Addressing the changes between the old development framework and the evolving participatory paradigm, he suggests, 'The contrast is between a linear, rigid, repetitive machine, and a rounded flexible adaptive organism' (1993: 13). Chambers further distinguishes decentralisation and empowerment as the central thrusts of the new paradigm:

Decentralization means that resources and discretion are devolved, turning back the inward and upward flows of resources and people. Empowerment means that people, especially poorer people, are enabled to take more control over their lives, and secure a better livelihood with ownership and control of productive assets as one key element. Decentralization and empowerment enable local people to exploit the diverse complexities of their own conditions, and to adapt to rapid change (1993: 11).

The participatory paradigm presents a new approach to development that is concerned with learning processes rather than blueprint models, based on cooperation rather than control.

The acknowledgement of local people's ability to provide a proper analysis of local conditions is one of the key factors that led to the rise of participatory appraisal techniques. Participation is further supported under the sustainability framework as a priority for strengthening the knowledge base and active capacity the average individual possesses towards supporting sustainable development. It is from this call for strong and meaningful local citizen participation in development activities that the role of the development practitioner has shifted from being an authoritative manager towards a facilitator of community learning. If this shifting approach is to be successful, then there is a need for meso-level support for the enhancement of locally-led appraisals of present conditions by providing practical lenses and tools for analysis and by providing strong methods for interpreting the long-term outcomes of development activities.

The recognition of the potential unsustainable consequences of human development activities provide one of the other significant shifts in how the role of development practitioners is perceived. Though science provides a means for assessing whether development activities will result in positive outcomes or adverse impacts, at the end of the day the real issue and challenge is a social one for it is the issue of people choosing to act, live and develop in a way that is sustainable or not. This has led to better investigations of social development issues, and it has also provided a critique of the way progress is defined under the modernisation agenda. Development practitioner roles are expanding to encompass more social science concepts and methodologies for analysis.

Social theories of development are helping to strengthen the functioning of sustainable development. While natural sciences provide much of the theoretical basis for the grounding meta-level sustainable development, at the meso-level social sciences play a significant role in providing a theoretical basis. Redclift suggests that the sustainability framework is providing a stimulus for reform within the social sciences, 'The interest in sustainability is beginning to call into question some of the

established modes of disciplinary thinking in the social sciences' (1999: 66). While Becker, Jahn and Stiess still express significant concern over the current connection between social sciences and sustainable development,

While there is growing acknowledgement that [social sciences] should contribute to sustainability research, social science approaches have not been incorporated into the mainstream of environmental research, nor have they resulted in substantial changes within the mainstream of social sciences. Moreover, there is a deep gap, cutting across social sciences themselves. Innovative sites of research have emerged mainly outside of academe, while within the established social sciences community a concern with sustainability and the environment has largely remained at the margins of the existing disciplines (Becker, et.al., 1999: 2).

They further suggest that the sustainability framework must challenge the basic assumptions, prevailing theories and methodologies that provide the standard framework for social science thought. This includes the need for a conceptual framework that clearly reflects the reality of society existing within a wider natural system (1999: 11).

Robert Hay argues for the move away from a technocratic fix approach to sustainable development founded on principles of environmental management and eco-efficiency that prevailed through most of its early history. '[T]he new century demands a new direction, and the technological approach has proven difficult to implement effectively on a global scale, as it does not delve into the root causes – the values and ethics underlying the decisions that are made – of the environmental (and social) crisis that faces humanity' (Hay, October 2005: 311). Hay further addresses the concern that in Western society few individuals acknowledge a personal contribution to the problems that sustainable development takes in hand. This is exasperated by the societal worldview that provides little connection between humanity and nature and almost no concern for the wider ecosystem impacts of our activities (October 2005: 323). A major challenge causing the role shift for professionals working with development is the challenge of reforming the way individual members of society relate to and understand the outcomes and impacts of human activities/development on both the social and natural environments. Reform started within professional fields before the defining of sustainable development to reshape the way that professionals understood these issues, but it is only recently that such reform is argued as needed throughout society.

A growing awareness of need for education to support sustainable development provides another important factor in influencing the changing roles for development practitioners. The concept of experiential learning provides a context through which the promotion of learning in development activities may be reexamined. Gordon Wilson discusses this in his discussion of the transition away from a “technocratic” approach to development,

Over the past ten to fifteen years, constructivist, learning models of development intervention have been taken up in response to these challenges to positivist “technocratic” models. Most significantly, learning models underpin the participatory approach to development practice that has been mainstreamed (2006: 506).

Wilson argues that the entire meaning of technocracy is under reformation as experiential knowledge, as generated in indigenous knowledge systems, is given more credibility for the implicit awareness it demonstrates for interrelating various forces of influence and its strong tenets of investigation and critical reflection (2006: 508).

Concepts of experiential learning provide more than just a new methodology for framing participation, they support a growing awareness that for people to understand the impacts that human activities/development have their active engagement in examining and investigating development processes is required. These constructivist, learning models challenge the elitist authority of trained professionals as vassals of an objective, rational truth. In fact, experiential learning models present the idea that each individual can be facilitated to employ methods of investigation and critical reflection to create his/her own understanding of development activities. Furthermore, this process has a wider influence on increasing local capacities for planning and managing development strategies than do objective models of learning.

Appeals for improvements in education to support sustainable development have now moved beyond the learning cycles that occur in development activities. Reform to all levels of education is being advocated as part of the sustainability framework. Even the Scottish Executive has made bold claims for the importance of education for sustainable development in *Learning for Our Future*:

[T]he scale of the challenge is such that it cannot be achieved unless people have the necessary knowledge, awareness, understanding and skills to play a part. Facing up to the challenges of sustainable development means changing the way we live and work and has implications for how we develop as individuals and, ultimately, globally. It requires us to learn new approaches and attitudes for improved use of our planet's limited resources and get much better at thinking about, and acting on, the long-term consequences of our actions as well as local, national and global consequences (Scottish Executive, August 2006: iv).

The Scottish Executive presents two areas where examination of our priorities must occur if sustainable education is to be effective. The first area is the principles by which we live and guide how social development is directed. The Executive identifies six principles of sustainable development that challenge previously assumed development principles:

*interdependence, diversity, carrying capacity, rights and responsibilities, equity and justice, and uncertainty and precaution.* The second area presented is the skills of action learning that are integral to education for sustainable development as a new mode of learning: *joined-up thinking, participative working, and reflective practice* (August 2006: 2-3).

These principles of sustainable development and the skills of action learning are identified by the Executive as the basis of 'learning for our future'. They further demonstrate the normative and methodological transition that is occurring towards contextualising how humans develop and interact with the wider natural environment. From the normative standpoint, there is a direct redefinition of societal values and the conceptualisation of progress. From a methodological standpoint, a new paradigm based on the sustainability framework is evolving that challenges the traditional methods of investigation, analysis and interpretation that influenced the structuring of our knowledge systems and worldviews. The transition is one of redefining both *how* we think and *what* we think about the world around us and our place in it. However, this challenge is substantial because it is fundamentally a recognition that society's prevailing worldviews and current linear, rational learning models are incapable of perceiving humanity's interaction with the natural environment in a way that will support sustainable development. This leaves education challenged with not only reforming what it teaches but also with the restructuring of how it teaches and the types of learning models that are employed.

These changes in the role of the development practitioner are resulting in a series of new value priorities being employed to judge the quality of the practitioner's work. These include encouraging empowerment, strengthening local ownership and aptitude, acting as a facilitator and educator rather than manager, and remaining flexible and adaptive. Alison Gilchrist suggests the following checklist to support practitioners in developing methods for enabling active community participation in development planning:

- *access*: ensuring participants have access to information, resources, meetings, activities and influence;
- *choice*: developing participants' knowledge about options and the freedom to make decisions about them;
- *rights*: ensuring participants' rights in relation to legislation and representation are respected and implemented (2003: 47).

These new values may be summarised as *individual/local capacity* for planning and implementing sustainable development. Key to strengthening capacity is: **education**- enabling people to understand the relationship between human development and the natural world through more joined-up thinking; **participation**- the ability to interact in decision-making processes about how development should occur; **planning**- the ability to assess the outcomes and impacts of potential activities; **knowledge systems**- a functional interpretation of sustainable development that provides guiding principles for the way development occurs; and finally, **responsibility**- understanding the importance each individual holds in shaping the quality of the environment and of society.

The formation of the Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust and the community buy-out of the island in March of 2002 identify an important historical moment for both land reform and development pathways in Scotland. The community buy-out of the Isle of Gigha is not the originator of the concept of collective reclamation of land which was previously subject to enclosure under the laird-tenant system, but the Isle of Gigha's buy-out was the first to occur under a devolved Scottish government and the dramatic changes they were implementing in the *Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003*. The level of support the people of Gigha received in the lead up to the buy-out and since from all levels of the government is unprecedented. In fact, the interaction between the people of Gigha and relevant government authorities (including the Scottish Executive, Argyll and Bute Council, the Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and the lottery-based Scottish Land Fund) demonstrates an exemplar and prototype of how the government can successfully formulate beneficial and meaningful partnerships with community-led development initiatives to strengthen local capacity for managing a sustainable development process.

The "professionals" working with the community of Gigha provide a powerful network of knowledge, skills and resources that are useful and manageable at a local level. A defining philosophy is embodied within the networking efforts with the Gigha Heritage Trust that directed how things evolved. This is the idea that the "professionals" are facilitating the community's development initiatives. The people who live on Gigha are taking the direct decisions about what type of development and future they want to pursue and what are the best pathways to reach that future. However, the achievement of this level of self-management by the people of Gigha became a possibility only through the strong commitment by the various government authorities to support and encourage this type of community-led sustainable development. The government is able to provide expertise, relevant information, specialists, resources and finances to support sustainable development, and this of course occurs far wider than on the Isle

of Gigha. What is unique to the partnership between the people of Gigha and the relevant government authorities is that the government authorities relinquished much more of their control and authority over the development process than is common.

The government authorities interact closely with the development process on Gigha, but the final decisions of what type of development does or does not occur is made by the people who live on Gigha and the Trust. The government still has the potential to strongly influence the type of development that occurs, but their way of influencing is by encouraging best practice towards sustainable development and by providing the knowledge and resources for the people of Gigha to make such a reality. In order to encourage good community-led sustainable development while maintaining a noninterventionist position and avoiding an authoritarian control over the development process, the government authorities work not to direct the actual development process but to provide the community that is directing the process the capacity to plan and manage a well-formulated programme for sustainable development.

The process of community-led sustainable development that is occurring on Gigha receives support from professionals in multiple roles and capacities. The wide profundity and knowledge that professionals working with the development process on Gigha bring to various development activities ensures that there is breadth and depth to what is regarded and dealt with as part of Gigha's sustainable development. Networking activities with the relevant government authorities also assures that the process of sustainable development on Gigha correlates with the wider objectives for sustainable development throughout Scotland. This networking further provides beneficial sharing of information and possibilities for specific activities between multiple development scenarios (e.g. between Gigha and other development projects). This chapter examines the roles of the professionals who work with Gigha and the level of success they have towards strengthening the development process. Three main categories of professionals are visible: the role of the Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust, the role of Government Officials, and the role of hired Consultants and Contractors. The second and third categories include quite a diversity of professional



roles but are categorised as such based on the more standard mode of interaction they have with the development process on Gigha. Following these general discussions of professional roles, an analysis of how these correspond with the idea that the “professionals” are facilitating the community’s development initiatives is presented. The following table provides a summary of the main roles served by professionals involved in the development process on Gigha before continuing to the full discussion of these roles.

<b>Table Six: Professional Roles in Gigha’s Development Process</b>	
<b>Professional Agents</b>	<b>Main Role in Development Process</b>
Community Members	Primary decision-makers about what type of development is to occur
Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust	The Trust Director secures the implementation of the development plan. The Administrator oversees the daily operations of the Trust. The Board of Directors investigates potential courses of action and reports findings to the members.
<b>Government Authorities</b>	
The Scottish Executive	Introduced Land Reform policies that legitimised Community Buy-Outs. Introduce policies that encourage sustainable development.
Social Investment Scotland, Scottish Land Fund, & Communities Scotland	Funding bodies established by the Executive that provide funding (through loans and grants) to support local level projects.
Highlands and Islands Enterprise (and Argyll and Islands Enterprise)	Advisory role with only non-local Board member. Support economic and enterprise opportunities in numerous ways: training, grant funding, regeneration activities, professional advice/consultation.
Argyll and Bute Local Council	Supports legal agency of the community buy-out and the work of the Trust by adapting local code and policy to better match their needs. Maintains several basic services on Gigha.
Quangos (e.g. Fyne Homes Housing Association)	Usually work with individual projects related to their expertise. Fyne Homes invested £3 million to build eighteen new homes on Gigha.
<b>Professional Consultants</b>	
Legal Firms	Provide legal services: legal support for the initial buy-out, drafting of new tenancy agreements, enterprise activities and loan agreements.
Architecture Firm	Establishment of Master (Land Usage) Plan and creation of building design guide. Good explanation of Plan to members.

Business/Hospitality Specialist	Consultant for Gigha Trading, Ltd. to increase services in hotel and cottages. Also provides training to islanders in service and management skills.
Renewable Energy Specialists	Consultants for Gigha Renewable Energy Ltd. on potential energy projects, investigating appropriateness of projects, and implementing wind turbines.
Agricultural Specialists	Consultants to Farmers and Agriculture Working Group. Provide information on how the Trust and the farmers can develop and secure the agriculture sector on Gigha.
<b>Private Contractors</b>	
Building/Construction Firms	Implement development works on Gigha: housing refurbishment, quarry operation, installing wind turbines. Building contractors are also providing training to islanders so they can maintain later repairs.

### **10.1 Role of the Trust**

The Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust established as the legal body representing the community's rights to self-ownership of the island. The Trust is also charged with the active duty of implementing and managing the development process on the island. The decisions in regards to planning the sustainable development of Gigha are to be taken by the members of the Trust with initial fact-finding and identification of possibilities carried out by the board of directors. It is the Trust though that must formalise these decisions into feasible projects and set out clear work agendas. The Trust is run by the Director and the Administrator, and the Trust employs five other positions. Seven further positions are employed by the Trust's subsidiary trading company. The Director holds the executive responsibilities for the Trust, including: implementation of development projects, reporting to the board of directors, liaising with relevant authorities, establishing contracts with consultants and contractors, and investigating future development possibilities. The Administrator oversees the day-to-day management of the Trust's operations and serves as a vital point of contact for the people on Gigha.

The Trust's most visible role is the implementation of the development activities on Gigha. The landscape of Gigha changed dramatically in the last few years, the size of the community has increased by fifty percent, and many new employment opportunities arose, so it is quite

expected that this is the focus of notoriety for the Trust's work. However, the long-term success of Gigha's sustainable development process depends not only on what activities are implemented over the short-term but also the Trust's ability to manage the development process into the future. Alongside every major activity the Trust implements, it also set in motion the means to assure long-term management of these projects. In regards to both housing refurbishment and the wind farm, the Trust established means to channel recovered profits into repair funds that will create a self-sufficient synergetic loop that ensures the quality of these endeavors remain constant over the long-term.

Probably the most exemplar achievement of the Trust is the ability to facilitate a strong partnership between the community-led initiatives and the government's agency and capacity for development work. The employees of the Trust effectively serve in the role of middlemen between the people of Gigha and the relevant government authorities. The flow between the government influencing the community on Gigha and the community on Gigha influencing the government occurs openly in both directions, but in either direction is administrated through the Trust. Part One on decision-making discusses the relationship between the people of Gigha and the Trust, therefore it is unnecessary to repeat it here. It is worth giving attention to the networking and partnerships that the Trust established with relevant public bodies and development professionals because several ideal partnerships resulted. The importance of the liaising responsibilities of the Trust Manager/Director is evident in the Trust's press release calling for applications for this position. Six of the eleven bulleted duties of the Trust Manager concern liaising activities. Five of these duties are in connection with the relevant government authorities, while the final duty concerns liaising with community members and working groups on Gigha (IGHT, 30 August 2005).

Direct work occurs between the Trust and several government authorities (*discussed further in the following subject area*). This work involves a wide range of activities, though the most significant may be seen as the central continuance of affable relationships between the Trust and the government authorities. The Director is challenged with formalising

beneficial partnerships between the community's development interests and the relevant government authorities that retain a majority of the societal agency and capacity for influencing development and social change. In general, the government authorities are quite willing to provide ample means for supporting and strengthening the development process on Gigha, however it is often necessary for the Director to identify and approach those authorities which retain the agency and capacity in respect to specific development projects to solicit their support.

The Director further aids in strengthening local capacity by providing direct support to the efforts of the board directors and the various working groups on the island. Working groups are enacted to increase the direct interaction of people on Gigha with the management of the development process, however there is a need for knowledge and advisory support in order to strengthen the capacity of the working groups. In most cases, the director provides the mainstay of that support. Early encouragement on how to undertake the management of their specific activity, including the identification of various opportunities, is often enough to set the working group in the right direction. In the case of the working group for agricultural activities on the island, the Trust initiated the support of agricultural consultants from the Scottish Agricultural College to provide the needed expertise and knowledge capacity. The Trust also sent two members of the paths and walkways group on a course about establishing and maintaining path systems in order to increase the working groups' knowledge capacity.

The fact that the Trust experienced difficulties in maintaining a constant appointment to the position of director is worth noting. The position is now in its fourth appointment, though the third person to serve as director was local to Gigha and only served in an interim capacity between the previous directorship and the most recent filling of the post. The title of the position itself has changed each time the position has been reappointed; the first appointment of Alan Hobbett as the Development Manager, replaced by Dr. Eleanor Logan as the Chief Executive, the interim position filled by Jane Rennie under the title of Director, and the most recent appointment of Dave McDonald as the Trust Manager. Corresponding with the changing of the title, there has been some restructuring of the position

each time but for the most part the director maintains the executive responsibilities of the Trust. It is unnecessary to go through the subtleties of these changes, but it is worth noting that it was envisioned that there would be some scaling down of the position after the initial three year appointment as duties shifted away from project formulation and implementation towards a more constant management role.

The difficulty of maintaining a constant appointment to the Trust's director position partially demonstrates why the ability of a community to lead their local sustainable development is given such importance. Gigha's community provides the most constant group of people with vested interests in the sustainable development process on the island and secures potential for the long-term management of that development. This is not to stipulate that the community of Gigha represents a static, constant or homogenous group of people. Individuals will come and go from Gigha, the dynamics of the community will change, and at times conflicting interest between members will arise. However, dependence on one person in the role of Trust Director provides a less secure form over the long-term management of the development process than does an empowered group of individuals working together to better the overall community's interest. The Director's role remains important mainly because of the professional knowledge and expertise this person commands, thus allowing the Director to structure and formulate the community's interests into a well-founded and planned development agenda and also the Director's awareness of the political and bureaucratic systems that the development process must engage with.

Individuals who live on Gigha can change as long as there remains an established system for the community's active and collective engagement in the development process and a series of cultural influences that support the learning of and respect for the individual responsibilities integral to a community-led development process. In this sense, one of the key roles of the Director is working with the people of Gigha to establish the systematic infrastructure to ensure that the community can collectively manage the bulk of the development process themselves. Local capacity is strengthened with training and education in the skills and knowledge they need to plan and manage a sustainable development process. It is likely that a manager for

the development process will remain a necessary position in that this guarantees the administration of project implementation. However, this is slightly different than the position of director where there is an immediate sense of an expert/professional supervision of the development planning. Ideally if the early work of the Director strengthens the overall capacity of the community to plan their own development process, then this type of directorship would become less necessary over time.

## **10.2 Role of Government Officials**

There are many relevant government authorities that interact closely with the Heritage Trust and the development process on Gigha. There is a direct correlation between the level of influence these authorities have over development in general (i.e. national government implementing planning policy and local government detailing specific land usage) and the type/extent of interaction they have with Gigha's development process. Beginning after devolution, the Scottish Executive implemented a relatively radical agenda for land reform in Scotland. Corresponding to how the Executive pursued a programme of governmental decentralisation in Scotland, the new course of land reform aims to encourage diverse usage and local ownership of the land with more commitment at the community level for its management and the protection of the environment. Early in the process of designing a new land reform act, the Land Reform Policy Group of the Scottish Office identified, 'that the overriding objective of current rural policy and thus land use should be to foster the sustainable development of rural communities; and the overriding objective of land reform today should be to remove the land-related barriers to that development' (February 1998: 2.5). The subsequent publication by the Land Reform Policy Group detailed further how both 'increased diversity in the way land is owned and used' and 'increased community involvement in the way land is owned and used' could be brought about through policy by: removing outdated and unfair feudal arrangements; providing potential for local involvement and community ownership; establishing better access to information about land ownership; and ensuring better integration of national policy for rural land usage with local level planning (September 1998: 3.2-3.3).

The *Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003* created a new type of agency for local communities in rural Scotland to play an active role in shaping the development processes of the land they live on. The practice of community buy-outs is the most extreme illustration of this new agency, while in other examples it resulted in better relationships between landowners and their tenants with more participation by the tenants about how the land is used and developed. Without the changes to policy implemented by the Scottish government that provide a strong agency for community ownership, it is quite unlikely that the people of Gigha would have pursued this option. Of course, other communities in Scotland did do so and had to fight against a government still based at Whitehall that did not support the idea of community buy-outs. However, Gigha had not experienced the type of “back-to-the-land” movement that brought the strong activist zeal to the Isle of Eigg that resulted in not only several clashes between Eigg landowner Keith Schellenberg and the newcomers but also the eventual “spontaneous combustion” of his Rolls Royce. The people of Gigha have the courage and strength to raise to the challenge of self-determination in order to reverse the history of deprivation that lairdism resulted in, but they would not have committed to the type of insurrectionary battle that took place on Eigg.

Fortunately for the people of Gigha, when the island was put up for sale in 2001 and community buy-out became a possibility, the stance of the national government towards such an idea had completely reversed. Not only was the Scottish Executive providing the legal agency for a community’s preeminent right-to-buy, but the relevant government authorities as a whole served to strengthen the capacity of Gigha’s population to make such a reality. At a national level, the major effect the Scottish Executive has for the possibilities of community-led development is through the formation of policy which corresponds in general with how the national government influences the planning process. Through the formation of policies that favor local-based planning and community initiatives, the Scottish Executive initiated both the agency of rural communities needed for them to undertake this type of radical land reclamation and also a substantial reformatory influence throughout the entire planning and land usage system in Scotland.

Several MSPs demonstrated their direct support for the community buy-out of Gigha prior to it occurring when such support was highly needed. Now that the buy-out is complete and a process of community-led sustainable development is underway, direct support from the Executive is less common. In one sense, it could be stated that the current relationship between Gigha and the Executive is the weakest among all the relevant authorities. However, this would misunderstand how the Executive influences change in general. The Executive's role is one of policy and ensuring that the type of planning system that exists in Scotland is well founded and guided by sound principles. National level governance is concerned with framing the broad outline for the type of development that should occur and creating policy that supports their chosen objectives. They also work closely with regional and local authorities to ensure that these governmental bodies have the ability to implement and manage the national development agenda. In doing such, the Executive allocates the management of local development to these decentralised authorities who take on the main authority for regularly interacting with community-led development initiatives.

Policies implemented by the Executive continue to influence and shape the type of development that is occurring on Gigha. The building of the three wind turbines on Gigha is one example where policies passed by the Executive provide the capacity for this renewable energy project to occur. The Renewable Obligation Certificate programme brought into effect in 2002 as part of Scotland's Utilities Act provided the impetus for small-scale renewable energy projects to feed into the commercial grid thus establishing these as profitable economic ventures. Furthermore, much of total grants and loans received to implement the wind farm on Gigha were originally made available for sustainable / renewable initiatives by the Executive (though these resources were given to HIE and Forward Scotland to administer their dispersal).

The establishment of Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs) throughout the UK in general and the establishment of Social Investment Scotland in 2001 specifically provides another important way in which the Executive facilitates community-led development initiatives like



Gigha's. The formation of SIS was initiated by the Scottish Executive in collaboration with the four clearing banks in Scotland to provide business support and loan financing for social enterprises by disadvantaged groups that are normally excluded from this type of support. Gigha's Heritage Trust received loan funding from SIS for the wind farm project and substantial support to ensure the rigor of the business proposal. Traditional lenders would likely find Gigha's proposal for a three turbine wind farm and the model of recycling profits into further development activities difficult to grasp, but this is exactly the type of project SIS was established to support.

The financial model established by the Trust, SIS, HIE and Green Energy UK—the energy company purchasing Gigha's electricity—provides an impressive model for how small communities may undertake significant economic ventures to support regeneration and development. This model is already being replicated by HIE with the establishment of the Community Energy Company to implement further community-owned ventures for renewable energy generation. Willie McSporrán, chairman of the Heritage Trust, explains,

Until now nobody had managed to crack the financial nut enabling a community with little money to become a significant local generator. The solution we have developed in Gigha works by combining grant funding with loan and equity finance secured at commercial rates. The company simply pays back the loan and buys back the equity within five years. What's more by year eight we will have built up a capital re-investment fund sufficient to replace the machines without recourse to further financing (cited in MacLaine, internet: 26 January 2005).

The Scottish Land Fund provided another powerful model through which the Executive influences the process of land reform and community-led sustainable development in Scotland. The Land Fund was initially launched by the Executive with money from the Big Lottery fund, but the granting of this money was administered by HIE. From 2001, the Land Fund was active over a five-year period during which £14million were allocated to 186 community groups. This money aided in 173,000 acres in Scotland becoming community owned or managed. Gigha's buy-out does stand out as the most prominent and most expensive achievement, but the Land Fund also aided the buy-out of the North Harris estate and the Anagach Wood Trust to name just two other noteworthy projects. Though the Land Fund is now finished, it has been replaced by the Growing Community Assets fund,

which will distribute £50million over the next three years to both rural and urban community projects. Again, this fund will be managed by HIE with money from the lottery fund. Land Fund Chair David Campbell stated to mark the fund's final grant, 'The Scottish Land Fund has changed the pattern of land ownership in rural Scotland, built more confident and self-reliant communities and reversed declining populations in some of the most remote and fragile parts of Scotland' (Big Lottery Fund, internet: 21 July 2006).

The success of Gigha demonstrates the amazing momentum that the Executive's lead in land reform and in empowering community ownership is towards promoting sustainable development. There were many initial critics of the Executive gifting £3.15million to the ninety-eight people of Gigha in 2002 so they could collectively purchase the island they lived on. However, the testimony since the buy-out of everything accomplished on Gigha—the £1million loan being paid back in two years, the first grid-connected community-owned wind farm in the UK, the rise in population to over 150, the more than tripling of the primary school enrollment, the first new houses in thirty years, all houses brought to a very high ecological standard, and the formation of several new businesses and many new job opportunities—really speaks to the sense behind that original investment by the government. It is not possible to suggest that all of these achievements are directly due to the financial support provided to the people of Gigha by the Scottish Land Fund grant. However, if the Executive had not established the agency for local communities to purchase their land collectively or provided the financial capacity to make the ideal a reality it is unlikely that much improvement would have occurred on Gigha. It is almost certain that the buy-out of Gigha would not have happened, and that the island would have been purchased by another laird. Thus, limiting the possibilities for all these other achievements to occur.

As the administrator of the Scottish Land Fund, Highlands and Islands Enterprise played an important role in facilitating the buy-out of Gigha. Beyond this, HIE remains extremely dedicated to supporting the community-led development initiatives on Gigha. HIE maintains an important advisory role to the Heritage Trust, and a constant association prevails with HIE employee Lorne Macleod serving as the only non-local on

the Trust's board of directors. HIE, through the guidance of Lorne Macleod, provides considerable expertise to secure the high quality of the development programme on Gigha. Since this community-led sustainable development process is pioneering in Scotland and often pursues ground-breaking projects, the advisory and counseling role of HIE is extremely beneficial. First, HIE facilitates the identification of development needs on Gigha. Second, once needs are identified HIE further facilitates by distinguishing potential courses of action and by providing relevant information on these courses. Third, since HIE works with many communities and development projects across Scotland they are able to bring to light comparable projects that may be replicable on Gigha. This feature also has wider benefit as HIE is able to proliferate lessons learned on Gigha. Fourth, HIE serves the role of a qualified objective observer. Most of the time the community-led development process is well planned but in those instances where a specific factor is overlooked or a potential problem unrecognized HIE's objective observation serves as a final verification tool. Finally, when specific resources are required to enhance the local capacity for pursuing the envisioned development programme, HIE is often able to connect the Trust and board of directors to the relevant sources of those resources.

HIE's local enterprise company, Argyll and Islands Enterprise plays an active role in providing economic and enterprise opportunities for people on Gigha. Again, supporting local initiatives with sound business advice is one of their key objectives. They also run short courses in business management to provide skills training for potential entrepreneurs; and there are even efforts to support 'modern apprenticeships' to increase the diversity of the skills base in the local economy. Fundamental to AIE's activities are several funding/grant programmes that support new business startups and local regeneration. AIE built three new craft units on Gigha to encourage new economic ventures, and they provided a grant for the upgrading of the petrol pumps at the island's shop/post office. Shortly after the buy-out, AIE even took their enterprise roadshow to Gigha to talk to the community about potential possibilities for expanding their local economy and to identify the methods in which AIE could support new enterprise initiatives.

Both the media and the government authorities give the highest publicity to the grants that these authorities provide, however the support they provide the Trust and the community-led development process on Gigha through an advisory role deserves significant praise. Without substantial grants like the original Land Fund grant to secure the buy-out, many development activities would not be possible. It is the advice though that facilitates the community in deciding what they regard as appropriate sustainable development initiatives. Several of the initiatives pursued on the Isle of Gigha occurred because the government authorities originally introduced them as possibilities to the Trust and the community. Examples include several of the financial models implemented for development projects, better networking and communication possibilities, and the system for prioritising housing needs. Finally, significance must be given to the basic emotional impact that receiving such strong and dedicated support from relevant government authorities to encourage a community-led development process on Gigha has for the island's population.

The Argyll and Bute Council provided substantial legal agency to the community-led development process by legitimising the development plans produced by the Trust at the direction of the community members as the primary programme for land usage on Gigha. The fact that the council was willing to adapt their initial findings in the draft local plan to match what is laid out in Gigha's master plan demonstrates a strong commitment by the local authority to let community participation provide the guiding force in development planning. This is not the only available example of the local council adapting standard policy in order to facilitate the fulfillment of specific projects or initiatives on Gigha that would otherwise be stifled. Due to the strong development objective to produce a doubling in the island's population and the headway already made, the council has at times judged Gigha's need for support based on the desired population rather than the current population. Three years ago the difference in the population being considered at one hundred or two hundred meant a different level of service and support received. Because the community-led and Trust-managed development process provides several of the activities and projects that would normally fall under the authority of the local council, Argyll and Bute

Council is enabled to consider a wider range of additional services for the people of Gigha. The local council maintains an active relationship with the development process on Gigha. Furthermore, the council works to provide agency to the Trust and the community so their development initiatives are acceptable under local code and policy.

Communities Scotland, an agency of the Scottish Executive, provided multiple grants for the refurbishment of the Trust owned houses on Gigha. In fact, the possible level of grants was extended for Gigha's project due to special recognition of the community-owned nature of the Trust's properties. Normally there would be limitations on the number of awards one landowner could receive, however these were extended for the Trust's properties by considering the grant applications as from the individual occupants of each house. Fitting with this grant scheme, Communities Scotland also provided several ideas for the ecological design of the refurbishment. Included in the advice from Communities Scotland was information on how the Trust could manage a rent-generated repairs fund for the long-term maintenance of these properties. This is important beyond the significant funding provided by the government for the refurbishment of the houses. Once the deprivation is reversed, the goal is that the Trust will become self-sufficient in managing these properties so the sizable funding becomes a one-off event. Communities Scotland also provides similar financial and advisory support for individuals on Gigha undertaking private building of new homes. Through their Future Builders programme, Communities Scotland provided funding for the setup of the quarry on Gigha to provide aggregate for the various building works on the island at a low financial and environmental cost.

There are several quangos (quasi non-governmental organisations) that have served significant roles in facilitating the development process on Gigha. Fyne Homes Housing Association is one important example. Fyne Homes has invested £3million in the construction of eighteen new energy efficient homes on Gigha, fourteen for affordable rent and four for shared ownership. A partnership between the Trust and Fyne Homes is already established to ensure that the Trust's system for housing needs prioritisation will effectively overlap with that of Fyne Homes. The aim of this is to

provide a high level of transparency for the overall system of housing allocations on the island. Fyne Homes will also work in partnership with the Trust to create a post for housing management to carry out upkeep and improvements to both organisations' properties. For the architectural design of these houses, Fyne Homes initiated a design competition between four architectural practices with the hope of promoting a very high quality final product. The architectural practices presented their findings not only to Fyne Homes but also to the people of Gigha who then provided their opinions of the designs to the jury that was set up to judge the submissions. The jury included the Trust director and the chairman of the board. The Scottish Executive and Scottish Federation of Housing Associations praised this design competition as a model for securing high quality housing throughout Scotland.

### **10.3 Role of Consultants and Contractors**

The roles of consultants and contractors represent two distinct types of work that support the development process, however they are grouped together because both types of professional roles begin at the initiation of the local community and the Trust. Consultants are engaged to provide knowledge and planning support, while contractors are engaged to complete specific work activities. Both are usually contracted for single projects or activities, though in some cases these projects are extensive. The Heritage Trust has initiated contracts with professional consultants to provide guidance towards legal issues, the agriculture sector, architectural design, land use planning, technological issues and enterprise/business issues. This includes a lengthy contract with a consultant for improving the services of the hotel and various holiday accommodations on Gigha. While in respect to work activities, contractors are needed for building and housing refurbishment, the construction of the wind turbines, the establishment of the quarry, and a series of smaller infrastructure improvements. Contained within the category of contractors, acknowledgement should also be given to those who produce technologies that are used on the island to support the development process, such as the wind turbines originally manufactured by

Vesta. These companies only have a secondary influence on Gigha's specific development process and do not warrant further detailing, but without the technological research and innovation that led to the production of such renewable technologies many of the impressive improvements made on Gigha would not be possible.

The expertise of the consultants that engaged with the development process on Gigha is crucial for the resulting achievements. Prior to the buy-out even occurring, it was clear that significant legal support would be necessary and the Trust established a relationship with the firm Anderson-MacArthur from the Isle of Lewis – especially with Crofting Law specialist Simon Fraser. Having provided legal services to the buy-outs of Assynt, Eigg and Knoydart, Simon Fraser was not only an obvious candidate to become the Trust's solicitor but was one of few people who had background in the legal challenges of securing a community buy-out. The turn around time from the island being placed on the open market and the closing of bids for Gigha was a mere ten weeks. This left the islanders little time to consider the idea of a buy-out and establish the legal process for doing so. The support of a solicitor who has direct experience in the legalities of the formation of an entity like the Gigha Heritage Trust and the process of community buy-out was the only reasonable option.

Legal expertise is required for many of the initiatives undertaken on Gigha. When the Trust attempted to establish tenancy agreements that fit more with the ethos of community ownership, engagement with a legal firm was required to create a fitting lease since no similar examples already existed. This legal support was more costly than board members preferred to spend, but since there was no other feasible option they consoled themselves with the idea that at least other community buy-outs will be able to adapt their own lease agreements based on the precedence of those created for Gigha.

An additional need for legal consultation surrounds the enterprise activities of the Trust. Along with the business advice provided by the government and Social Investment Scotland, significant legal advice was required to 'crack the financial nut' for the Trust to undertake the wind farm project. Establishing community-owned enterprises has unique challenges

that commercial undertakings do not face. A major reason for this is the simple fact that they do not commonly occur and thus there is no established framework, but with more support and agency being given by the government to locally-led development initiatives it is quite likely that better frameworks for these types of ventures will result. The board of directors' consolation that at least future buy-outs will not face the same costs is significant because each groundbreaking effort that occurs lessens the number of obstacles that future buy-outs or community development initiatives are forced to deal with. This effectively makes such initiatives a more promising opportunity to pursue.

The formulation of Gigha's Master Plan for land usage also required consultants to provide expert advice to ensure its quality. The Glasgow-based architecture firm Anderson Bell Christie was hired to finalise several sections of this document. Members of this firm held workshops on Gigha and a member's meeting to reach community acceptance on a design guide for all future houses on the island that covers both issues of ecological building and appearance. They also presented a model, agreed upon at the members' meeting, for the style of housing and building expansion on Gigha which is to mirror the traditional 'cluster model' of farmsteads on the island.

Over the next ten years, the amount of new building occurring on Gigha will result in almost a doubling of the number of houses and also include several buildings for other purposes. It is thus important that this significant and clearly visible change to the physical environment is carried out in a manner that is well planned and supported by the people living on the island. The consultants from the architecture firm were able to secure both of these factors. Their expertise in land planning was expected, but the level of commitment they demonstrated to the community-led nature of Gigha was impressive. Multiple opportunities were provided for islanders to learn about the possibilities for land usage and new building, and many opportunities were also made available for people to give their opinions of the plans. The consultants showed considerable sensitivity to the concerns and opinions raised by islanders, and comments by islanders resulted in several changes in the plan. Other noteworthy areas in which consultants played an active role are the improvement of tourism services on the island



with Bob Chicken providing consultancy to the subsidiary trading company over multiple years, the restructuring of agricultural practices on Gigha supported by consultants from the Scottish Agricultural College, and the establishment of Gigha Renewable Energy Ltd. with support from wind expert Dr. Colin Anderson.

Off-island contractors are necessary for the substantial housing works and quarry operation on Gigha. Contractors were also necessary for the raising and connecting of the wind turbines. In general, the work of contractors is straight forward, but the work of the three local building companies that joined together to carry out the housing refurbishment over a six-year period on Gigha deserves specific attention. These three companies provided a bid that was extremely competitive and showed a level of sympathy towards the community-owned nature of this project. Islanders are employed by these companies with the goal that they will learn the skills to continue future maintenance work. The Trust and builders work together closely to supervise the work agenda and schedule to ensure that disruption to islanders is minimal. Consideration of the needs of individual occupiers are taken into the finishing touches of each house refurbishment, and occupiers are given a chance to comment about styling, colours, etc. Lorne Macleod, the HIE representative on the board of directors for the Gigha Heritage Trust, notes the humour of the current situation.

There is so much building work going on in Gigha that the community was fearful of the difficulty of finding good builders. However three local building companies from Kintyre came together and formed a consortium, and are now busy working on the island. It's a novel situation seeing people travel from the mainland to work on Gigha. For years everyone went the other way. The last time I travelled over to the island, twelve labourers came off the early ferry with me (HIE, internet: September 2006).

The influence of consultants and contractors may not appear that significant because they are initiated by the Trust and the community members, but their specialist knowledge provides access to prospects and potential activities that otherwise would go unidentified or be unfeasible to implement with limited knowledge. Consultants and contractors can provide significant capacity for increasing the scope of what is covered in the development process. There is a second distinguishing feature of the work of consultants and contractors on Gigha that is important: the fact that many

of the relationships with consultants and contractors are initiated by the Trust not just to provide guidance and expertise to the development process but also to actively encourage and strengthen the capacity of community members to interact with the development process. The consultants from the architecture firm provided an important educational feature for the community by clearly explaining how they designed the land usage plan – detailing the principles that influenced the design and why specific decisions were made. This could be overlooked as a basic necessity of having the customer agree to the consultant’s work, but of course if the Trust was not a community owned entity then the presentation would not have to engage the entire community. Furthermore, the consultants taking the role of facilitators result in a distinctly different example of a relationship between the expert and the local in which it becomes necessary for the expert to gain the direct understanding and support of the local community. A clearer example of increasing local capacity is the building contractors employing islanders to work on the housing refurbishment in order for them to learn the skills that will allow them to provide future maintenance work and repairs to the housing stock.

## **10.4 Increasing the Capacity of the community to be the professionals**

### **10.4.1 Agency and Capacity-**

Working to facilitate the community’s development initiative, the professionals aid in increasing both the agency and the capacity of the people to plan and manage the development of Gigha. It is important to distinguish between increases in agency and increases in capacity in order to understand the nature of empowerment that has occurred on the island since the buy-out. Agency is used in this work to denote the substantive freedoms that allow a person to engage in the processes of shaping the wider social systems that have a demarcating effect on his or her life. Increases in agency happen from additional or more comprehensive means for participating in the social and political processes through which development options are framed. Capacity is used to denote the knowledge, expertise, skills, and resources

that a person possesses which allows him or her to act on that agency with understanding and significance. Increases in capacity occur when individuals learn further wisdom, skills, and methods that strengthen their abilities to frame development options and projections to reach their long-term goals for sustainable development.

Since the devolution of the Scottish Parliament, efforts made in land reform and governmental decentralisation including the focus on community involvement have significantly increased the agency of local communities to play an active and fundamental role in the development processes of their locale. Changes to policies and law created the potential for undertaking opportunities that were previously either legally difficult to achieve or fully impossible. These changes initiated at the national level have echoed throughout the policy of government authorities in Scotland down to the local councils. The agency for community-led development released by these policy changes is primary for opening the opportunity of community-led development as a potential.

However, it is the work to increase the capacity of communities like Gigha's to plan, implement and manage their own development that has transformed the opportunity for community-led development from a possibility to a legitimate option. The opening of legal agency to manage development from being centralised with government to being accessible by people at the local level is necessary for community-led development initiatives to occur. If this happens, but people still lack capacity—access to resources and knowledge/skills needed to engage with the development process—then it is highly unlikely that significant changes will occur. Supporting the capacity of local communities to engage with the development process by opening access to needed resources and knowledge is a stronger factor in the influence of change than basic provision of legal agency.

Table Seven, on the following page, depicts how the various professionals supporting the development process on Gigha worked with increasing agency and capacity.

<b>Table Seven: Professionals Working with Agency and Capacity</b>			
√ = Basic Support; √√ = Strong Support			
<b>Professional Agents</b>	<b>Supporting Agency</b>	<b>Supporting Resource Capacity</b>	<b>Supporting Knowledge Capacity</b>
Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust	√	√√	√√
<b><u>Government Authorities</u></b>			
The Scottish Executive	√√		
SIS, Land Fund, & Communities Scotland		√√	√
Highlands and Islands Enterprise (and AIE)		√	√√
Argyll and Bute Local Council	√√	√	
Quangos (e.g. Fyne Homes)		√	
<b><u>Professional Consultants</u></b>			
Legal Firms	√		√
Architecture Firm			√√
Business/Hospitality Specialist		√	√
Renewable Energy Specialists			√
Agricultural Specialists			√
<b><u>Private Contractors</u></b>			
Building/Construction Firms		√	√

#### **10.4.2 Interacting with Local Interests-**

For a professional working with local-level development initiatives, the releasing of agency to a community may be a challenging concept since it leaves the project's success or failure up to "whim of community members". However, on Gigha the members of the community were always careful and thorough about the decisions taken. This is actually quite reasonable to expect for at the end of the day it is those same people who will live with the results and consequences of the development activities. The professionals who help to structure the development programme will leave and there is little accountability towards them even if problems do arise. Even though many interesting and exciting possibilities were discussed on Gigha, the actual decisions taken remain quite prudent and relatively conservative. The wind farm on Gigha is a groundbreaking project, but in reality this was based on putting together several well-proven activities into a unique formula with energy production from wind being the most established modern renewable. There is not a case on Gigha of the development process

heading off into extremely uncharted territory that could result in unforeseen consequences. Ideas are discussed and at times one person may speak of something on whim and rashly, but the nature of community decision-making means that this one opinion is evaluated and checked by the other members.

Another fear for professionals is that a community-led development process will be guided by sentiment rather than expertise. This concern is more complex than the previous to address at least in the brevity planned here, but there are a few factors that must be accounted. First, many “decisions of sentiment” which seem inappropriate to a non-attached professional are important for promoting the value-system and culture that members of a local community are attached to. Second, though members of the local community may lack in the meta-level knowledge and expertise that the professionals command, members of the local community do command a significant indigenous knowledge system that is vital for proper micro-level application of development projects. Third, as discussed with the above concern, those people who live with the long-term consequences of development activities are usually prudent about the decisions they make, and though they may not initially command a meta-level understanding of sustainable development they are eager to learn if it will result in more reflective and informed decision-making/ planning. Finally, authority control of agency is not the only way to influence a development process. Professionals can have a considerable influence on a community-led development as a facilitator and educator through increasing the community’s capacity to plan and manage a high quality development process. Since it is the community that possesses the strongest ability for securing the continuity of the development process, then this can prove the most lasting way for a professional to influence a development process.

#### **10.4.3 Skill Training and Knowledge Gain-**

Both agency and capacity are presented as means for influencing the ability of community-led development. It is suggested that agency is a prerequisite condition and without appropriate agency community-led development is impossible, but it is also argued that agency alone does not

make community-led development a legitimate possibility. It is strong capacity that allows community-led development to function. Agency or capacity on its own is not fully relevant. It is possible to subdivide the idea of capacity between resource capacity and knowledge capacity, and in this way access to necessary resources may be viewed as strongly dependent on issues of legal and political agency. Access to educational/learning resources have some connected agency issues in regards to knowledge capacity, but this also proves the type of capacity that increases in agency on its own cannot amend. Learning and educational opportunities must be implemented to secure substantial increases in knowledge capacity, though minding the review of experiential learning cycles it is possible to take a much wider definition of learning opportunities than is common.

A professional facilitating a group of community members step-by-step through an activity can provide the expert guidance that is desired and the learning opportunities for individuals that support the long-term security of the development process by increasing the community's knowledge capacity. Even in the case of a professional planning and designing a specific activity in full there is potential for a learning opportunity if the professional takes the time to explain how and why specific decisions were taken. The consultation process completed by the architecture firm in regards to the land usage plan is closer in spectrum to the second case rather than the first, but this consultation was still valuable for members of the community to understand and to agree with how and why land usage is planned on Gigha.

Strengthening community knowledge capacity is a prominent method for securing long-term sustainable development for three main reasons. First, it results in there being multiple "experts" from the local community providing long-term guidance to the development process. Second, traditional professional roles are temporary while community members are relatively permanent, thus the community is in the appropriate place to provide such long-term guidance. Third, a cooperative community-led development process results in an extensive review process for any decision to occur, and if each community member is able to provide well-established knowledge to the process then development projects are backed by a large amount of guidance.

Hypothetically for example, if each member of a hundred-person community is able to gain ten percent of the knowledge capacity of the professional expert then the community as a whole would actually contain a knowledge capacity ten times greater than the expert. This of course over simplifies the situation because if each community member knew only the same ten percent that the expert does then there is still a ninety percent lack of knowledge in the community compared to the expert. Both situations are extreme examples, more appropriately if a community employs five consultants and each consultant facilitates a working group of ten people, then first only fifty percent of the community would be engaging in experiential learning. Second, each working group is likely to learn only a small amount of the professional's overall knowledge, maybe around fifteen percent per working group. However, when we view the overall knowledge capacity increase in the community rather than per individual, there would still appear a substantial seventy-five percent increase in knowledge capacity.

#### 10.4.4 Relationships of Power and Social Change-

A discussion of power is useful in order to better understand how the type of professional facilitation advocated in this work can support meaningful social change. Theorising on modalities of power has provided one of the most pervasive themes within the social sciences. This brief discussion will not attempt to detail the varying conceptions of power, but will rather focus on identifying areas where power relationships have both positive and negative ramifications for promoting social change through the process of community-led sustainable development.

Foucault provided a revival for the theorisation of power by demonstrating the ubiquity and malleability of power relationships as created through the 'economy of discourse'. Prior to Foucault's work, discussions of power were much more structuralist in nature and concentrated on quantifiable forms of control and domination. Westwood explains that the Foucauldian analysis is, 'to view power as relational and part of social life in all its diversity' (2002: 133). This analysis gives credit to the power held in discourse and normalising trends created within

modernity and rationality to shape meaning and understanding. This power is not a direct control over individuals, but rather a relationship people enter into with the social world as free actors. The normalising features of the social world people interact with influence the way they think and act in that world. This type of power must be continually recreated and exercised by the same actors who are influenced by it.

Foucault's discussion of power directly challenged and inverted Bacon's more traditional view that "Knowledge is Power" by stressing the fact that those with power are able to directly define what is knowledge.

We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production (Foucault, from *Surveiller et punir*, cited in Sheridan, 1980: 165).

This conception of power being positive and productive as it is manifested through the economy of discourse became the basis for Foucault's theory of Power/Knowledge. In this theory, power and knowledge are inseparable and actually constitute one another. Furthermore, for Foucault the power/knowledge dynamic becomes the basis for the ordering of all political action. 'There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations' (Foucault, from *Surveiller et punir*, cited in Sheridan, 1980: 220).

One of the primary questions this understanding of power would raise in the case of the facilitation of community-led development on Gigha is whether or not the facilitators still maintain control over the process on Gigha through the editing of the types of knowledge they provide. As the people of Gigha move into the uncharted waters of sustainable development, they often turn to the technical advice of trained facilitators and government professionals for suggestions on appropriate methods to proceed. This automatically gives the professional facilitators a level of power within the development process on Gigha because the people of Gigha accept their advice/opinions as a higher level of "truth" than their own opinions. This level of power held by professional facilitators does create an opportunity for



abuse because it provides the opportunity to steer the direction of the development process on Gigha by stressing certain information while denying other information on potential routes of action thus determining what courses of action are known by the people of Gigha. However, the existence of this power/knowledge relationship and the opportunity for such abuse does not specifically necessitate its abuse. Furthermore, a Foucauldian analysis recognises that this type of power/knowledge relationship is inescapable and remains pervasive throughout social life.

Foucault explains further,

Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (cited in Gordon, 1980: 131).

Thus, in a certain manner, all that can be done is to get on with the work and to accept that power/knowledge dynamics will continue to influence what practices are deemed legitimate. However, if we recognise one of the main analytical bases for Foucault's theory of power/knowledge, we can also understand how the style of professional facilitation advocated on Gigha is actually working to decrease the prevalence and potency of a hierarchy of power/knowledge. Foucault was concerned with 'the management of populations' that required modernity to individuate and objectify its citizens, and following from this the fractured nature of social life (Westwood, 2002: 134-5). The increasing of institutional capacities for the population of Gigha to cooperatively plan and manage their development process contrasts this concept of managing populations through their individuation.

The work of professional facilitators on Gigha is based on a learning model that empowers communication communities, engenders critical reflection, and supports the self-actualisation of the people within these communities to define their own reality. This type of work to strengthen communities to plan and manage their own courses of development specifically counters the concerns that a Foucauldian analysis highlights. By increasing agency, facilitators can work to increase the legal power

communities hold. Education and training that increases capacity for community-led development should be seen as strengthening local knowledge. Thus, the work of facilitators on Gigha is aimed directly at making the people of Gigha less subservient to “keepers of truth” in power/knowledge relationships. Furthermore, by working to establish cooperative inquiry groups and promoting critical praxis, facilitators are actually encouraging communities to become the creators of their own truths and understandings of their local environment. This specifically challenges the idea that the people of Gigha are dependent on the truth that is dictated to them by the professional facilitators.

A second area where power relationships continue to have an influence on Gigha is among the community on the island. The people of Gigha being free of a laird's rule is by far the most obvious termination of a traditional power relationship since the buy-out. The laird's power was usually mediated through a factor who also no longer exists on Gigha. Not only did the laird and his factor control “positions of power” on Gigha, but they often enacted specific policies that limited the substantive freedoms of the people of Gigha. One example from the buy-out is the adaptations that are being made to farm leases to allow farmers to have a more direct say in the way the land is managed. Traditionally, the minister and island church elders held a substantial amount of power within the community. This does continue today, but the extent of their power is not as significant. However, new power relationships have also arisen due to the community buy-out.

The Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust is now the owner of the island, and with this takes on a unique power role that replaces the traditional role of the laird. The executive director of the Trust and the Board of Directors are awarded a level of power by the other members of the community. As fact finders who investigate possible courses of development, they may be seen more as “investigators of relevant information” than as “creators of truth”. The community members on Gigha respect the opinions of the Trust executive and the Board of Directors because they are committed to spending substantial time working for the development process. However, the Trust must communicate regularly with the members, and members actively

question/ challenge the ideas presented by the Trust. This is an area where improvements have occurred as people gain confidence to be active in the political decision-making of the Trust and also as participation becomes more socially normalised.

Foucault's analysis of the power/ knowledge dynamic does provide understanding of how this is a pervasive part of social relationships, but it provides little insight into how social change can be obtained within the network of such power relationships. One area where the power/ knowledge dynamic is inadequate is in its account of hermeneutic approaches. If we consider Habermas's notion of communicative action and the influence speech acts have on individuals' actions, then we can begin to single out an area for promoting social change while acknowledging the perseverance of power relations within the power/ knowledge dynamic. McCarthy summarises the importance of communicative action as, 'Establishing relations through the exchange of illocutionary acts make it possible for speakers and hearers to achieve mutual understanding about their courses of action, that is, to cooperate rather than compete in important areas of life' (1994: 265). Habermas details how 'ideal speech types' can be used to strengthen democratic participation, and how institutional changes can substantially increase the ability for individuals to act together as equals. This does not deny Foucault's suggestion that each society has procedures that limit and control discourse as a key component of its 'regime of truth', but it does suggest means for promoting social change by opening deliberation about this 'regime of truth' to wider and fairer public participation.

The model for cooperative decision-making and participatory planning evolving on Gigha has helped to create a social environment where power relationships are not as "powerful". These relationships still exist in many various forms, and as Foucault demonstrated these are created by the people subject to these relationships. Authority is given to certain individuals in the community because they hold some type of respected knowledge or position. It would be inappropriate to argue that the development process on the island has substantially lessened these types of power relationships. In fact, it is clear that the development process has

created several new “positions of power” while not completely removing all the traditional “positions of power”. However, what is also apparent on Gigha is that the opening of opportunities for stronger cooperative decision-making and participatory planning has engendered a more democratic discourse where those individuals in “positions of power” are not able to enact such a total control over the discourse. Furthermore, the recognition that the people of Gigha are moving through a process of critical praxis and reflexive inquiry to discover what is appropriate for their sustainable development has led to a recognition that there is no one person who knows or could know what is right for all of Gigha. In this setting, cooperation to formulate a “new knowledge” for the benefit of Gigha's sustainable development is proving highly important, thus increasing the value of wider participation.

10.4.4.1 The Discriminatory Potential of Community: A final area of power that must be addressed is the potential for communities to become exclusive and discriminatory. Delanty explains that the 'we' of community is a protective and defensive strategy, and there is a danger that community can take on authoritarian forms (2003: 68). There are specific factors being institutionalised on Gigha that can be criticised as potentially promoting discrimination and exclusion. The main area where concerns arise about potential discrimination is the level to which members of the community have the ability to block new people from coming to live on Gigha.

There are legitimate reasons to be concerned with any community taking on authoritarian forms, but it must also be recognised that the type and level of exclusion that occurs on Gigha is in correspondence with current societal laws and practices of exclusion. The Trust, as the legal body owning the island and renting the properties, has some legal ability to reject certain applications for residency. However, it is important to acknowledge the commitment to the doubling of Gigha's population as a desire to expand and attract new comers, not to exclude. This population doubling will depend almost entirely on people moving to Gigha from off-island. There are concerns by members of Gigha's population about how this doubling of population will impact the island and its community, how it will influence

the culture and quality of life valued by the islanders. These concerns are raised by members of the community, but they do not result in discriminatory actions. The real concern for the people of Gigha is the process of sustainable development and how the population doubling will fit with the overall development.

The concern over fitting with the sustainable development of Gigha is the only factor that really results in practices of exclusion. A question must be asked though, if under a growth economics model a bank or lender has the legitimacy to judge a proposal on set economic criteria, does a development trust utilising a sustainable development model have the legitimacy to utilise more holistic criteria to judge how an individual will interact/ fit with the overall development process? On Gigha though, the members of the community do not review each potential resident and decide if they fit or not. However, when the island needed a new head gardener, the Trust started a recruitment process. The candidates would of course be reviewed for their competencies in fulfilling the duties of this position. When a person comes to the Trust with a proposal for a new business that they are interested in starting on the island, the details of the business proposal will be considered along with the credentials of the individual.

The examples above of how people are judged on Gigha are considered social norms and not viewed as discrimination. There is no evidence to suggest that the practices of exclusion that occur on Gigha are structurally different than those that occur in wider society. The real issue of concern over potential discrimination then is not the structure of how exclusion occurs but the legitimacy of the judging criteria that are used. The declining of support for a business proposal because it is not viewed as economically rigorous is socially acceptable exclusion, but the declining of that proposal based on the applicant's race is unacceptable discrimination. As already mentioned, the main judging criteria on Gigha are based on the desire for sustainable development. One area where we can understand Gigha's judgment criteria better is in regards to housing and how people are excluded from tenancy agreements. First, it must be noted that the judgment criteria for housing are used mainly when the number of applicants for housing outnumbers the number of available properties, so the criteria are

applied to choose the best candidate rather than to exclude undesirables. There are several clear priorities in Gigha's housing policy: ex-residents returning to the island to live are given high priority, people taking up employment on the island will also be given high priority, and people wanting to have a second/holiday home will be avoided.

Homehunt Gigha was established as a fair and transparent system for housing allocations. The criteria for housing allocation was agreed upon by the community members, and this is the main way in which the people of Gigha have a direct say in the judgment of who is offered a tenancy. Now that the Homehunt criteria are established, the Trust administers housing allocation and members are not involved in reviewing individual applications. The process of review is clearly detailed in the Homehunt Gigha guide:

1. The applicant who would make 'best use' of the property - for example, by using disabled adaptations, or by using all the available bedrooms will be considered first.
2. If there is more than one applicant who would make 'best use' of the property, we will offer it to the person with the highest level Priority Pass.
3. If there is more than one person with the same level of Priority Pass, or if there is more than one person applying and no Priority Passes are being used, then the offer will go to the person who registered with the Trust first (Homehunt, 2005: 5).

Furthermore, the Priority Passes are clearly explained and denote individuals who have a 'significant housing need'. Most people will not receive Priority Passes, and many properties will be allocated to people without such passes. However, if people do have priority passes they will receive favorable treatment. Finally, there are people not eligible for housing on Gigha based on three criteria: outstanding rent arrears, history of anti-social behaviour or criminal activity, or providing false information in the application.

Similar criteria are placed on the sale of plots for private builds. To be offered a plot for private build, a person must have a confirmed offer for permanent employment on the island or be approved for relocating/starting up a business on the island. The other main area where people will face a clear judgment process if desiring to relocate to Gigha is in regards to employment. Obviously, judging applicants for an advertised position opening is a standard process and there is little difference of how this would

occur on Gigha compared to social norms. If someone is interested in relocating or starting up a new business on Gigha however, the judgment process they will have to undergo is slightly unusual. The judgment process usually follows three steps of approval: first a written proposal is submitted to and considered by the Board of Directors, second the applicant would meet with the board, and third the applicant would make a presentation to the members for final approval. Thus, in the case of business proposals, community members do have the opportunity to judge individual applicants. Businesses with an emphasis on quality, premium/niche market, and value added products will be given priority. Further advice on business proposals is available from both the Trust and AIE.

The main concern that must be addressed is how do practices of exclusion correspond with ideals of sustainable development. The early history of sustainable development applied as a critique of the unsustainable practices of modern development was based more on this defensive strategy of excluding inappropriate or potentially harmful activities than on a proactive strategy of detailing and promoting best practice. The defining of sustainable practices necessitates the contra-defining of unsustainable practices, so theoretically the rhetoric of sustainable development applies a level of exclusion and discrimination towards certain types of actions and development models. When utilising a development model that differs from the growth economics model, it is only fitting that a differing set of judgment criteria are applied. The people of Gigha have worked to ensure that their criteria are fair and transparent, and furthermore that the criteria are used to secure the continued balance of the development process.

The most significant difference between the criteria used on Gigha and other more common judgment criteria is that those used on Gigha are more holistic and do not focus solely on financial measurements. I can find no reason to suggest that the use of a more holistic judgment criteria that better represents the interests for sustainable development on the island should be criticised as discriminatory. As the owner of the land, the Trust and its members have the right to decide how many people they want living on the island. If applicants outnumber open positions, whether for employment or for housing, the Trust should have the right to establish a

clear and fair criteria by which they will select the best candidate. In fact, it is completely necessary for sustainable development to establish clear goals and expectations for the type of future that is desired, and from this to establish means for judging if certain actions will move in the direction of these goals. Sustainable development requires active planning to reach the type of future desired, and it is important that strategies and judgment criteria are employed to ensure the best fit with the proposed plans. The people of Gigha having control over their land and their development means that they are also in the power role to carry out this type of judgment which is in keeping with the overall project of community-led sustainable development.

### **10.5 Community Development to secure sustainability**

John Watt, the director of strengthening communities at Highlands and Islands Enterprise, stated, 'The population growth in Gigha is remarkable. It is great credit to the hard work done by the Trust over the last four years. Gigha is an excellent example of what a community, in control of its assets and in partnership with a range of agencies, can achieve in terms of regeneration' (cited in Ross, 13 October 2006). The work of professionals interacting with the development process on Gigha is prototypical. The founding feature of the way the professionals work with Gigha is the dedication to the community-led nature of the development process. Furthermore, their work aims to increase the agency and capacity of the community to lead the development process. In taking this innovative approach, they modeled many pioneering methods for clearly strengthening the quality of a sustainable development approach.

The Scottish government often expresses concern over the level of grant dependency that exists throughout rural Scotland because continual dependency on grants to secure regeneration is a clear sign that the desired regeneration is not occurring. By acknowledging the many significant ways in which both agency and capacity increased for the community on Gigha, it is possible to recognise that the cycle of dependency that exists in many locations throughout Scotland in regards to social development and



regeneration is much deeper than just dependency on grant funding. The decreasing of professional/expert dependency on Gigha by increasing local knowledge capacity demonstrates the removal of a sizable barrier to social regeneration. A major reason for the change in approach is recognition of the fact that social development is a continuous process that cannot be solved by one-off projects. Through putting their focus into projects that increase both the agency and capacity of communities to plan, implement and manage local development processes, the government is able to provide more successful influence on long-term development and change. For example, the government was able to provide the political agency for a community-owned wind farm to be a viable financial option, to provide the legal agency and resource capacity to allow a community to implement such a project, and to provide the knowledge capacity so they are able to structure the project in a way that it will decrease the dependency on grant funding for future development work. It is this idea of decreasing dependency within rural communities that is fundamental for the resulting successes of the development process occurring on Gigha.

A deep ecological definition of sustainable development often incorporates the idea of self-sufficiency, and though full self-sufficiency is not something being advocated on Gigha or in this work there is some basic recognition that development that leads towards self-sufficiency is usually positive for extending sustainability. The opposite of self-sufficiency can be viewed as the type of dependency present in many rural communities for securing social development and change that is mentioned above, and in this manner it is appropriate to view this type of dependency as a factor of unsustainability. Just as self-sufficiency cannot be considered synonymous with sustainability, dependency is not a direct synonym of unsustainability, rather both are important factors that can influence the possibility for development being sustainable or not. However, it is difficult for a development process that ingrains substantial dependency issues to drive sustainability. Thus, the government's work to decrease dependency and to increase local agency and capacity on Gigha is a highly influential approach towards securing sustainable development.

The professionals facilitating the development process on Gigha are able to provide substantial knowledge capacity to secure the quality of the development planning and without this a noticeable deficiency would result in the work of the community and the Trust towards implementing sustainable development. Nonetheless, it appears that it is not the transfer of specific knowledge that should be credited for many changes occurring on Gigha. Rather it is the empowering effects that knowledge transfer has for the people of Gigha and their efforts at cooperative management of the development of their island that proves substantial. With a professionally trained director for the Trust, much of this knowledge capacity is already secure on the island, but the majority of the community would remain dependent on this one expert in a manner that is little different to when they were tenants under a laird. This type of expert-led development model is typical and seldom results in the level of achievements already seen on Gigha. When a development process is expert-led, even with the use of participatory appraisal and extraction of information from the community as in a participation-as-means model, the level of commitment and dedication of local people to the development process, a sense of responsibility for its success, and attempts to reproduce a synergetic cycle of development achievements remain limited within the community. On Gigha, the more the community is actively empowered to engage directly with the development process of their island and their livelihoods, the more these changes to the social network on the island appear to transition in a way that will secure lasting sustainable achievement.

In cases where local governments are not able to provide strong support for local development initiatives as occurs especially in the Global South, non-governmental organisations may be able to provide this type of support. NGOs could form partnerships with national governments to ensure that the legal and political agency is made available to local communities to plan and manage the development of their local environment. The NGOs can focus on increasing community resource and knowledge capacity for planning and managing sustainable development in their locales. In certain areas where the level of deprivation is much more substantial than it was on Gigha and in cases where populations do not have

adequate access to water or food then these basic challenges undermine the potential for strong community participation, and in these cases provision of basic-needs resources takes priority. However, it is possible to start at this level of the management of access to basic-resources to encourage community leadership and collective responsibility.

#### 10.5.1 Meso-level Analysis-

Utilising an understanding of agency and capacity, it is possible to begin to draft the terminology for analysing the likelihood of a project effecting long-term change towards sustainable development. It may not be appropriate to use “community” as the local unit of a development process since in many places it is hard to find a geographically-local grouping of people that have strong common bonds as is presents on Gigha. Instead, it may be necessary to first start with merely considering geographically distinct areas/locales at the local-scale where direct development planning would occur. However, if there is not a sense of community in a given area, initial challenges may arise in regards to structuring a system for cooperative decision-making in the locale. This relates to the discussion in Section One of this work and the idea that cooperative decision-making processes can aid in the formulation of a community identity.

Let us assume for sake of analysis that some decent system for local-level participation in regards to development planning already exists for a given local environment, then it is possible to start by considering what agency and capacity exists among this local-level decision-making and development planning group to provide for strong sustainable development. First addressing agency, the initial question that we are assuming has already been answered is do the local people have effective and egalitarian means for influencing development planning? If the answer to this question is negative then a substantial challenge is required to address this basic level of participatory agency. Second, is there substantive agency backing the local decision-making to ensure that development planning is implemented? On Gigha, the Trust serves the mainstay of this capacity successfully. If there is no agency for actually implementing locally-led development planning, then participation is relatively meaningless. Third, it is necessary to consider

if there is the legal and political agency for this type of locally-led development process, and of course in Scotland political reforms make this more feasible. Finally, the level at which political and legal agency allows for the synergetic cycling of development achievements into the overall local development process must be considered. Again on Gigha, the Trust is able to secure this synergetic cycling by investing recovered profits back into further development projects, thus allowing the community to reap the benefits of earlier development work. This final point is quite important, though currently seldom occurring, because this aids in strengthening local resilience and increasing development capacity while at the same time decreasing reliance on grant funding for regeneration activities. Few local areas or communities currently have any means for recovering potential profits from previous development activities or reinvesting previous achievements into future projects. Community ownership does not need to be the only means for securing this type of synergetic development cycling, local development funds could be established to support locally agreed activities and projects with a set stipulation of some percentage of recovered profits paying back into the fund.

The concept of capacity requires a more substantial analysis than for agency, but it also lends itself to a less quantifiable analysis. Capacity is subdivided into resource capacity and knowledge capacity to provide more potential for framing this analysis. Resource capacity can cover any potential resource that is needed to implement development activities, though on Gigha by far the most important resource is financial capacity. Through government funding, the Trust was able to purchase the other needed resources for local development. Gigha's case is also directly connected to land ownership and issues of property rights, but because of the community buy-out this resource is a given while in other places the lack of land ownership could prove a stumbling block for development opportunities. Other resources that are important to the capacity of a sustainable development process such as raw materials (timber, stone, water, etc.) and technological resources (renewable energy systems, communications, etc.) depend on the type of local environment where development is occurring. As mentioned earlier, access to these resources may be viewed as an issue of

agency rather than capacity. For the people of Gigha, the government's massive support of their financial capacity overruled issues of agency by providing the means to purchase the other resources that they lacked access to. If this was not applied in a way that will generate future financial capacity for the community to continue their development process, it would be easy to criticise the heavy focus on financial capacity as the means for securing all resource capacity.

Knowledge capacity is a demanding issue for professionals facilitating development. In the majority of cases of professionals facilitating knowledge capacity on Gigha, the information shared with the Trust and the community only related to the individual projects dealt with at the time. Through experiential learning, the people of Gigha learned many aspects for appropriate planning and designing of sustainable development. However, the transfer of meta-level understandings of sustainable development are not as direct as the transfer of micro-level applications, and that which occurred was often a secondary feature of explaining a specific application or initiative. Furthermore, there still appears general difficulty in facilitating holistic and integrated development planning. On Gigha, planning was subdivided into specific categories, though there was some effort made post-planning to ensure that these specific development categories would integrate.

Utilising the concept of meso-level sustainable development, it is possible to view increases in local agency and capacity to plan, implement and manage development initiatives as the formation of a strong social infrastructure for connecting meta-level understandings of sustainable development to timely and locally relevant applications of micro-level projects. Meso-level sustainable development was defined as those processes that facilitate the translation of meta-understandings of sustainability into practical projects and activities that encourage and maintain sustainable development. One piece of this definition is the meta-understandings, and this is usually the area of experts and professionals. The other piece of this definition is the micro-level application where sustainable development must prove locally relevant. These two aspects of meso-level sustainable development are coupled strongly together in a community-led development

process that is facilitated by professionals to increase the local agency and capacity in dealing with the process. Furthermore, this secures more opportunities for dealing with the continuous nature of development and change in a timely manner.

Referring back to the dependency versus self-sufficiency issue, what becomes clear is that much of the potential for creating sustainable development is not based on the specific science behind the approach. Rather this potential is based on social processes that put average citizens in either the role of beneficiaries of government aid and professional-led development or in the role of active and responsible participants in the development of their local communities. In this sense the idea of expert-directed or professional-managed sustainable development is almost a misnomer, for it is impossible to truly create social change that is lasting and development that is sustainable if it does nothing to alleviate bonds of social dependency that restrict individuals from actively participating in development processes. Meta-level understandings of sustainable development remain important for providing valuable knowledge of how to plan and design sustainable development. However, if a view of meso-level sustainable development is taken that acknowledges the importance of social infrastructures for promoting the active participation of local people in development processes, then a significant concern for sustainable development becomes the transformation of social processes to create the possibility of this type of participation as a foundation to sustainable development rather than just a derivative.

Legal agency for local participation in development activities and access to necessary resource capacities to implement and manage development are both important factors in building a social infrastructure where community-led development is possible. However, for this possibility to be legitimate, local people must have the knowledge capacity for understanding how to plan, implement and manage sustainable development. The process of participation and collective decision-making is critical for establishing common bonds that inspire cooperative action for local development. Meta-level understandings of the principles of sustainable development and its design are crucial guidance for planning

such development. Professional facilitation not only provides relevant information but also inspires experiential learning cycles and supports reflective/adaptive knowledge capacities in the community by people interacting with the development process.

Overtime, these activities become immersed in the cultural and value systems of a given community further establishing their endearing nature. Through local infrastructure changes, social processes can be adapted in a manner that supports sustainable development. A major goal in transformations to local infrastructure is decreasing dependency on outside authorities to direct development and social change. This must be directly connected with increasing means for direct participation and active responsibility by the average citizen in framing development opportunities. By analysing standard development processes and the system of authority for decision-making that occurs in these processes, it is possible to establish an indication of the control of agency for development and social change. If local participation is to be meaningful, then it requires the support of strong agency. Furthermore, if participation is to inspire cooperative respect and responsibility for local development, then it is necessary to establish some method of equal and egalitarian participation within that development process. But if we are to return to the long-term influencing of cultural and value systems to promote principles of sustainability, then it is essential to consider the facilitation of a strong local knowledge capacity for planning and designing community-led sustainable development.

The modes in which the professionals are working with the community-led development process on Gigha provide a valuable example of how a partnership between expert facilitation and local participation may occur. This process of working to empower local communities so they may gain the agency and capacity to direct their own local development activities is part of an emerging innovation in the way professionals work with development and social change. This development innovation attempts to reduce local dependency on expert intervention while at the same time establishing greater potential for networking and interdependence. Margaret Ledwith provides considerable insight for understanding how social change occurs and how the professionals can carry out transformative development work in *Community Development: A critical approach* (2005). Expanding from Paulo Freire's idea that education functions either to liberate or domesticate, Ledwith discusses how community development can be enacted as an innovative learning process for promoting critical and reflective praxis. It is by working with communities within their informal educational contexts that development work can expand beyond ameliorative effects and take on a transformative nature because this establishes a critical consciousness among the members of a community. 'For community development practice to achieve an emancipatory dimension, it must be capable of creating a body of practical knowledge grounded in everyday experience in the search for a more just and sustainable world' (Ledwith, 2005: 28).

Ledwith provides a model of critical praxis in order to locate the factors of both change and power within community development (*see Appendix G for full model*). Ledwith's model is based on findings from her own extensive work in community practice and development, and several case studies highlighting the practicality of this model are included in this work. Two major streams of influence in community development are distinguished, one is *critical consciousness* while the other is *hegemony*. The hegemonic circuit of this model distinguishes the factors that replicate



ideological consent and reinforce subordination, while the critical consciousness circuit identifies those factors that aid in establishing alternative worldviews based on equity and justice. Critical consciousness forms among members of a community through praxis and reflective inquiry. This process creates an experiential learning cycle in the community that Ledwith views as being in a dynamic relationship with the hegemonic influences of wider society and especially political influences, in fact it is viewed that community is the place where the forces of these two circuits overlap and are brought into reconciliation. The wider social and political influences are considered hegemonic because they advocate and promote the dominant worldview – ideas that often function to replicate the status quo. 'In this way, the journey towards critical consciousness is rooted in an analysis of the lived experience of people in their communities, within society' (2005: 42).

Before we continue, it is necessary to further address the distinction between development that is ameliorative and development that is transformative. Ameliorative improvements occur as incremental changes that influence the functioning of a system (increasing efficiency, productivity, etc.) while leaving the structure and values that the system is founded on intact– this is first-order change. Transformative change effects directly the underpinning ideologies of a system and often results in a paradigm shift– this is second-order change. When considering the challenge for sustainable development, the importance of second-order change and the reassessment of value systems and worldviews requires transformative development. Proponents of a technocratic fix/ weak-definition for sustainable development may view ameliorative change as providing the substantial basis for the types of improvements that are needed, but proponents of a strong definition for sustainable development suggest that if change does not influence the ideological basis of development practices, then a significant footing for sustainability will go amiss. The importance of Ledwith's work is in demonstrating the connection between transformative development and the growth of critical consciousness in communities that encourages direct reassessment of prevailing value structures.

The idea presented in this model of critical praxis that wider society, especially the political system, often has a controlling and shaping effect on communities in a hegemonic form is not surprising nor uncommon. However, partnership between the local community on Gigha and relevant government authorities presents a relationship that is contradictory to this model. The government, through the facilitation of local agency and capacity, worked to increase the critical consciousness of the people on Gigha. This is important for two notable reasons. First, it demonstrates a strong way in which government authorities can facilitate development that is not only ameliorative but also transformative, an issue that is highly significant when we consider the depth of changes required for sustainable development. Second, this challenges the efficacy of the modeled idea of hegemony when political systems are undergoing radical reform as has occurred in Scotland since devolution. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that hegemonic influences and the replicating of a common ideology are not always negative. They usually do not influence significant social change, but the example of Gigha in the wider context of the significant reforms that occurred through the political system of Scotland in regards to decentralisation, land reform and the uptake of sustainable development theory validates the government as a substantial catalyst for social change.

This notable contradiction aside, this model still remains valuable for understanding the pathways of change within community development and explicating the importance of internal features of learning, reflection and practice that members of a community undertake. If we acknowledge, as Ledwith suggests, that the influence of wider society often reproduces hegemony, then it is possible to appreciate the more dynamic and organic nature of community to create transformative change rather than the replication of the status quo even though this may have an ameliorative nature. If we also acknowledge the levels of human society where change may occur – the individual, community, and wider society, we can begin to appreciate the central importance community plays in this process. Change may occur at all three levels, but the community level serves a vital meso-level function of assisting change in both directions. The critical praxis

model displays the primary function of reflection and action in shaping community corresponding to the secondary functions of theory and practice. Theory and practice respectively represent the meta and micro-levels of development, and from this it is possible to distinguish the meso-level role community plays as the place where real praxis occurs thus forming connection between theory and practice.

Ledwith refers to praxis as the, 'unity of theory and practice' (2005: 1). This is compatible with the way meso-level development is used in the previous two chapters. It further suggests that critical consciousness, more than a system of design techniques, is the fundamental feature necessary for bringing theory and practice together within the meso-level. Thus, to understand how to facilitate sustainable transformation it is essential to examine the process of conscientisation, and Ledwith argues, 'the dynamic between ideas and experience takes us deeper into the process of *conscientisation*' (2005: 41). From this, the primary consideration is how do people learn to participate in development activities, to engage in reflective inquiry in regards to their own action, and to formulate new views and opinions about the world they live in. In regards to the work of development professionals, facilitating communities to initiate this type of experiential learning cycle and empowering local people to maintain the agency and capacity to participate in development activities are objectives of their work that are of equal importance to the specific outcomes of development activities. Furthermore, it is these objectives that set in place the potential for development work producing enduring change.

### **11.1 Working with Local Agency and Capacity**

If it is acknowledged that a community-led sustainable development process has important educational and cultural potential, a key goal for development professionals would be to empower and inspire knowledge among community members about how to understand and manage a sustainable development process. Furthermore, a connected goal would be to establish the systems/infrastructure for community members to actively engage with each other in planning the aspects of their common future. Many community development initiatives are influenced and shaped by, 'the

Freirian concept of “conscientisation”, calling for raising the self-reflected awareness of the people rather than educating or indoctrinating them, for giving them the power to assert their “voice” and for stimulating their self-driven collective action to transform their reality’ (Rahman, 1995: 25).

This work attempts to extend a more tangible concept of “voice” by presenting the classifications of agency and capacity. Capacity is further divided into resource capacity and knowledge capacity. Utilising agency and capacity, it becomes possible to complete a quantifiable analysis of the improvements that occur for increasing self-driven collective action in community development. Measurement of agency would include classification of both the legal/policy potential and the infrastructure potential for active citizen participation in planning and managing development activities. This would also include the level to which participation is reflected in project implementation. Measurement of capacity would include: first, classification of access to resources necessary for development activities; and second, classification of access to knowledge/information necessary to plan and implement development activities and also opportunities for learning further skills/techniques for securing sustainable development. However, to make a full analysis of these improvements it is also critical that there is some distinguishing of the learning features that result from an experiential learning cycle in community-led sustainable development which is the purpose of the following sub-sections.

#### 11.1.1 Advocating Co-operation-

In correlation with the community buy-out of the Isle of Gigha, the people living on the island supported an ideal of collective participation in the future development of the island that would allow each member of the community on Gigha to become an active participant in this process. Establishing this type of co-operative system proved a challenging endeavor that has required regular, systematic reform to bring about. These challenges demonstrate the fundamental role that the systems and infrastructure for decision-making and social participation have towards influencing social values of citizenship, responsibility and of course cooperation.

Cooperation –the act of working together to achieve a common goal– is a social process that benefits from specific individual behavioural practices. The use of language and its possible variations provides an apparent example. The early complaints on Gigha that the voting process was being used merely to rubber stamp the board’s directive is an example where discourse was framed in a manner that limited meaningful interaction. Correspondingly, the first major reforms to the decision-making process were to open discourse to provide more opportunities for participation and influencing decisions that are taken. This led to a change in the linguistic presentation of opinions from being aimed at demonstrating absolute authority of one’s argument towards being aimed at presenting factual information that would benefit the cooperative decision-making, and in this there was a noticeable lessening of an adversarial approach to meetings. Of course, no classes took place on Gigha about the difference in language that is competitive or accommodating in nature, but still corresponding with the increase in more meaningful forms of participation was a change towards more cooperative styles of discourse.

The challenge for the professional facilitator in regards to cooperation is engendering the types of behavioural practices in individuals that provide for advantageous processes of mutual aid. One approach would be behavioural educational / training, however for the development facilitator the process of critical reflection as part of the experiential learning cycle may be viewed as a more substantial educational device. Thus, it becomes necessary to consider what forms of practice confirm the appropriate experiences for advocating cooperation. From the Gigha study, the process of community decision-making is identified as a fundamental experience where it is possible to further cultivate cooperative behaviours through the expansion of participatory opportunities.

If the establishment of a system of decision-making can be facilitated that results in strong participation, then much of the foundation for cooperative action will exist. Half of the process of cooperation may be seen as the actual collective action / work to achieve a common aim, but the other half of this process is the defining of a common aim (i.e. development goals) and the delineating of individual roles for achieving this aim. Once

collective agreement is reached on a common aim and the necessary roles are distinguished, the action/work usually has a high success ratio. It is at the earlier step of reaching collective agreement where cooperation most often fails. Thus, facilitating forms of decision-making that aid reaching collaborative agreement and include methods for conflict resolution has a significant impact on advocating cooperation. Furthermore, forms of decision-making that encourage collective deliberation and strong opportunities for participation create the types of experiences from which people through critical reflection are able to distinguish the behavioural practices and values that support cooperation.

### 11.1.2 Creating Vision-

The idea of community development must arouse the belief that a “better future” is attainable and that there is real benefit in working to achieve it. In Chapter Six, the process of ‘forming common ground and envisioning the future’ that took place on Gigha is examined. The aim of this development stage is to promote a theoretical understanding of what type of development is desired and includes the three steps: 1. Assessing the Current Situation, 2. Creating Vision, and 3. Defining Development Goals and Priorities. In regards to experiential learning, this stage is important for establishing an understanding of the purpose of planning development and working for community/social betterment.

On Gigha, the identification and classification of a clear set of goals for development bolstered a sense of common ground and objective for the community members. This was part of the process of formalising a collective vision for the future of the island and fostered a vital recognition that a well-planned development agenda could produce a future that is more secure and sustainable. The basic learning feature of this development stage created a desire to work for change and improvement among the population of Gigha. There is also a more substantial methodological learning that supports an increase in knowledge capacity that is facilitated by this development stage. The early steps of defining development goals included methods to analyse

forces of change and understand local development circumstances. The learning of these methods to assess the current situation provides the community with a vital knowledge capacity that encourages development choices that are relevant and timely.

The step of envisioning the desired future aids in establishing an awareness that considerable improvements can be made through deliberate development work, while the defining of development goals promotes a clear common objective among community members. Furthermore, the collective action to complete this development stage advances shared responsibility for the development work and an appreciation of the benefits of this work occurring communally. Community-led development work usually covers more breadth than when individually enacted and more depth than when it is from a top-down directive of government. The realisation for people on Gigha that their community had the ability to direct a strong development process for the island proved a significant turning point in the values of the island's culture. The history of dependency on the laird and on the government to effect social change established a culture of passivity and reluctance to develop. With the formation of a common vision for the future, the potential of each member of the island's population to serve a vital role in the functioning of the community and its development became a valued asset.

#### 11.1.3 Inspiring Enthusiasm-

Facilitating a community-led development process requires a population that is enthusiastic about the development work in the first place. Without this, success is highly unlikely. Empowering a sense of ownership over the development process is an essential part of inspiring enthusiasm. Two specific features of a sense of ownership can be distinguished. First, people must feel like they are actively involved in determining the course of development. Second, the resulting outcomes and dividends of this development process need to return directly to the local population for deciding how they should be applied. In regards to this second feature,

success is increased if the establishment of cycles of synergy are facilitated in order for benefits to be reapplied to strengthen the overall development process. Of course, on Gigha much of this ownership issue was achieved with the community buy-out, however ensuring these two features of ownership required more than just the buy-out.

The concepts of agency and capacity provide a more complete analysis of ownership. As was discussed in the previous chapter, the notable work by the government authorities to increase both the agency and capacity of the local community to direct their own development process proved significant to securing success. Both increased agency and capacity are directly connected with expanding a sense of ownership. Agency provides the ability for a community to direct their development process and to ensure that dividends are cycled back into further benefits for the community. Capacity provides people with the knowledge and resources to plan and implement a well-founded development agenda. As on Gigha, agency can be increased through legal changes and is a rather straightforward process when backed by governmental commitment. Capacity, on the other hand, requires the facilitation of a more comprehensive learning approach that takes into consideration both the necessary skills and values.

The learning feature apparent from empowering ownership is an awareness of personal responsibility and accountability for the development's success. As the opportunities and modes for participation have increased on Gigha, it has been met by an increase in the number of individuals actively involved in the development process. Furthermore, there is a noticeable decrease in the culture of blaming others when problems arise. One of the more difficult challenges for the facilitator can be the stage of relinquishing control as she nears the end of her time working with the community. However, the better established a community is with a strong agency and capacity for taking direct ownership of the development process, the easier this relinquishing of control becomes.



#### 11.1.4 Securing Appropriate Knowledge-

The level of knowledge capacity in a community is an important issue when considering how able a community is to lead its own development process. Facilitators and academics alike can aid community-led development initiatives by producing knowledge in a format that is applicable at the local level. At the local level, expertise of all development work is not necessary. For example, it was not necessary for there to be enough expertise on Gigha to actually install wind turbines or even complete the housing regeneration. However, enough understanding of these activities was required so the Trust could successfully identify which courses of action were appropriate and to plan their implementation. Referring back to Table Five and the planning stages listed in Chapter Eight, facilitation should work to build knowledge capacity in order for communities to manage and execute stage one, two and four. In regards to the third stage *Practicing Development*, it is reasonable that expert advice and support will be required to implement certain projects.

The need for facilitation in the initial years of a community-led development process is almost certain, but if the facilitator hopes to produce a lasting impact then she must consider how to lessen dependency on expert guidance. Based on the case of Gigha, it is clearly feasible for *Envisioning the Future*, *Planning Development*, and *Monitoring and Evaluation* to be formed at the local level and, where they exist, led by community networks. In regards to the first stage, the work of the facilitator can generate enough experiential learning for a community to understand the tools and methods to complete this stage during later cycles of the development process since this is a stage that functions entirely on methodology. The *Planning Development* stage can be more difficult because it requires understanding of potential projects that may be beyond the common knowledge of the community, and since overtime these projects will change it is impossible for all knowledge to be learned during initial facilitation. This stage can be supported by the networking efforts of government authorities by ensuring that access to information on relevant projects is up-to-date and accessible.

Much of the *Monitoring and Evaluation* stage also depends on methodology and can be readily learned, but as better techniques become available for assessing trends of sustainability it is important that they are made available for local usage.

The real question that must be addressed is what type of information/ knowledge is beneficial for local communities attempting to lead their own development process. When facilitating the defining of development goals and sustainability indicators on Gigha, I was struck by the lack of information describing how a process where the local people were viewed as the main actors could be enacted. There was a significant amount of academic work describing theoretically what a good indicator would entail, but little information describing how a community would decide on appropriate indicators. Thus, I had to complete a significant amount of preliminary work to establish the processes I would facilitate, and while doing so I produced a series of questions that I used to reflect on the relevance and applicability of my models:

*Questions for Methods* (to consider and explain when designing techniques and methods to support community-led sustainable development)

- How does the method promote sustainability?
- How does the method make things better? Why is it necessary?
- What are the payoffs and rewards versus the drawbacks and constraints?
- How can a community take ownership of the usage of the method or process?
- How does the method/ process function?
- What are the steps/ stages in the process and how are they completed: e.g. research, analysis, conception/set up, implementation, management, control, monitoring and evaluation, etc.?
- At the end of the day, a theory is of little value if it cannot be acted on in practice; how do people get on with it and live with it?
- Accepting that all projects do not apply for every circumstance (i.e. no blue print models), how does a community know if it is right for them at a given time?

These questions may prove a beneficial guideline even if just for self-reflection for those attempting to produce knowledge and methods that can aid a community-led development process.

In order for methods to be valuable at a local level, they need to provide information that is practical when related to people's daily lives. Concepts, theories and ideas are understood when applied to real-world

experience. In the context of their own development process, the people of Gigha understood a considerable amount of complex ideas about sustainable development, but at the same time if these ideas were brought up outside of this context there was a significant lessening of clear understanding. When local people can easily relate tools, techniques and methods to their own process of development, they prove highly beneficial. The relevance of these tools is even stronger when they are ones that are easily managed by a community leading the development process. However, when techniques and methods require local people to engage in activities that they would not naturally do as part of a community-led development process, gaining an understanding of these techniques and methods proves difficult.

One of the most touching rewards I received while on Gigha was from two of the people who served on the working group for defining the indicators. Both had expressed an interest in being a part of the group but were also concerned that they would not have much of worth to contribute. After we had presented our findings to the wider community, they both thanked me for the experience and said that it was rewarding to be part of this accomplishment. Furthermore, they were really pleased to have gained the methodological skills this process required and felt they had a greater understanding of how the development work should function. For myself, the real reward is knowing that my facilitation of that working group engendered an experiential learning cycle from which members of the group gained important knowledge that will allow them to better manage future development planning. Working to increase knowledge capacity in a local community so that the people have the confidence and ability to plan and manage their development process may be viewed as one of the most powerful means of empowering ownership.

## **11.2 Multiple Dimensions, Multiple Solutions**

Increases in agency and capacity of local communities may be classified as a form of meso-level development. The specific project outcomes would be the micro-level achievements of a development process, and the meta-level achievements would be a greater understanding of the

theoretical concepts that ground sustainable development. Experiential learning provides a means for facilitating an increase in methodologies and values that support planning a wide range of projects that are in accordance with sustainable development. The specific outcomes of a process are unique to local circumstances, the more universal achievements that a facilitator may hope to effect are the experiential learning features that occur from undertaking the process. This type of meso-level learning effects significant change by establishing in the community a strong agency and capacity for planning and managing sustainable development.

Sustainability is a concept that encapsulates numerous disciplines of study and draws on the work of a wide range of professions. In fact, if we view sustainability as a critical theory of development about the way we live in the world, then the sustainability worldview can be applied to consider almost any detail of human activity. Thus, an increase in multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields of study is important for framing sustainable development. There is no single discipline that holds a wide enough perspective to answer the complex challenges that are raised in the ideas of sustainability. 'Our current structure of scientific thinking, which is locked to the reductionist epistemological foundation, has a limitation of applicability in dealing with regions of organized complexity such as the environment' (Mebratu, 2001: 2).

To practice well-informed sustainable development, there is a need for a diverse range of knowledge that covers both the environmental and the social aspects of sustainability. This includes diverse forms of knowledge and a wide dissemination of that knowledge. Furthermore, there is a need to think about how change and transition towards sustainability can be facilitated through both bottom-up and top-down initiatives. An expansion of our concept of knowledge would aid this process because currently what is classified as knowledge is grounded in the rational, linear model of scientific thinking. Though this type of thinking has provided advancements in a specific type of knowledge, it has also created an atomised view of the world and has limited other types of thinking such as holistic pattern recognition.

The call for multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural aspects in sustainable development will be limited unless the professionals and academics begin to work to 'deprofessionalise' their disciplines to a level where interaction is readily possible. Chambers puts forward the idea of deprofessionalising the disciplines as a casting off of elusive terminology and fabricated boundaries to make interaction among disciplines and between academia and development practitioners easier. However, it may be more appropriate to label this as "desegregation" of the disciplines since it is not suggested that individual professionals abandon areas of specialism. 'We [the professionals] have to ask how and why we construct our realities, how and why we learn and mislearn' (Chambers 2000: 127). If we are to create lasting interdisciplinary theories to support sustainable development, then the divides that occur between different disciplines and between theoreticians and practitioners need to be broken down. The recognition of a need for diversity in approaches is a recognition that no discipline produces an ultimate truth. Instead, the approach should be one of producing a knowledge that can be easily translated for use with different types of learning/ knowing and provide adaptability to the specific circumstances of a situation rather than guiding people down a singular, uniform path.

Professionals and academics working in the field of sustainable development have been able to identify a large amount of meta-level knowledge that forms the foundations of its theories. In Chapter Nine, it is acknowledged though that there is a deficiency in application of this theory and that meso-level work provides a strong opportunity for increasing applicability. In specific regards to community-led development, meta-level theory is often unable to be related directly to the real-world development experience. However, further work to base meso-level methodologies, techniques and tools on this type of meta-theory and to support experiential learning cycles that relate meta-theory to real-world experience can effectively deepen community understanding of complex ideas about sustainable development. As with the Gigha case, many people working directly with a local development process will hold a significant amount of knowledge about that process and concepts of sustainability, but when meta-level theory is discussed without context to this local process it becomes

meaningless for them. If a long-term goal of wider social change towards forms of sustainable development is to be achieved, then considering how learning opportunities link to daily-life experiences becomes a basic challenge. Providing people with the methods to assess local circumstances, formulate development goals, and to evaluate results are important means for facilitating an understanding of and an ability to plan sustainable development. Facilitating values of cooperation, commonality, responsibility, accountability, and a desire to work for change are also important features to consider. It is these learning processes that occur when people engage directly with development activities that allow facilitators to work towards results that can be universalised between multiple locales, whereas project outcomes remain specific to local circumstances. Finally, these means to empower agency and capacity provide an important route to engendering transformative change in community networks.

## CONCLUSION

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# THE NEW DAWN OF A CULTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY

## CONCLUSION- THE NEW DAWN OF A CULTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY

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For the population of Gigha, taking community ownership of the island they call home is referred to as *Latha Ghiogha*, or the New Dawn, and on the island it is possible to see many changes and symbols that represent this new dawn. Before even stepping off the ferry onto the island, several of the many changes that have occurred on Gigha over the last four years are obvious. There are now three wind turbines turning and producing renewable electricity; many new houses are now built; and even the new flag of Gigha's community run Heritage Trust waves over the island. However, both islanders and visitors alike declare that the most significant of changes is not something that you see by looking at the new construction or the many signs discussing these new development activities. Rather, one really experiences what the New Dawn has brought to Gigha by talking to the people who live there and experiencing the excitement and commitment they have towards making sure that the future of the island continues to shine brighter under the light of this new dawn. A new culture is advancing forth on Gigha and the people of this island are maturing into committed stewards of the island and the potential it holds for future generations to come.

The 15<sup>th</sup> of March is now celebrated each year on the island as its most significant holiday—Gigha's Independence Day. Since 2002, this day marks the end of dependency on a Laird, the single owner of the island who controlled and shaped what the future would be on Gigha. However, not only is this a move to independence; but the community-led sustainable development process occurring on Gigha has also supported a move towards interdependence. This development process is framed by the people of Gigha with a strong conviction for conserving and enhancing the quality of the natural and cultural heritage of the island and also with a important consideration of the legacy future generations will inherit from their efforts in the present. The recognition of the direct connection between human development activities and the quality of the island's natural and built environments establishes the basis for this interdependence. Furthermore,



the ideal that the development of the island will be a process open to the participation and direction of all the island's population enhances the importance of the community and collective action.

This value of interdependence provides a foundation to the type of sustainable development that the people of Gigha wish to pursue. The growth in both agency and capacity among the community to make this type of development a reality correspondingly resulted in the rise of a culture of hope and confidence on the island. Lorna Andrew, Project Administrator for the Trust, stated that the most obvious change to the island since the buy-out is the change in the community's outlook:

People are more optimistic and feel like they have some control over what happens on the island and are willing to take responsibility for it. Visual changes include the windmills and the new housing, but I think the main difference is in the feel of the place. It's less depressed and less bleak, there is a new optimism and people are looking forward to the future (HIE, internet: Sept. 2006).

This work examined the main social processes that were significant to establishing a strong agency and capacity among the people of Gigha so that they may plan and manage the sustainable development of the island and its community. Throughout this examination, not only do we ascertain the significant components of the development process occurring on Gigha, but we also uncover the learning and socio-cultural development that transpires among the people of Gigha as they directly participate in this process. Now that we have addressed the processes and the values that support community-led sustainable development and also how these processes can be facilitated by professionals and government authorities, we come full circle and are able to better analyse what are the challenges being addressed by sustainable development in general.

### **12.1 Restructuring and Framing Development Possibilities**

Alan Kaplan presents in *The Development Practitioners' Handbook* (1996) three phases of organisational development: 1) dependence, 2) independence, and 3) interdependence. These three phases are originally distinguished as phases of individual human development. The first stage of dependence occurs during the infancy and childhood of a person when she is completely dependent on parents and the social infrastructure for providing

the basic necessities of life. As a person passes into adolescence and young adulthood, she becomes increasingly independent. The independence phase is often marked by an active revolt and resistance against the previous bonds of dependency, during which the young adult attempts to assert her own identity and self-differentiation. The final stage of interdependence occurs during the adulthood and maturity of a person when she is secure in her own identity and at the same time able to recognise her continual dependence on others. Interdependence is a difficult phase to achieve and maintain, and in reality we often regularly move between the three phases only ever achieving a sense of interdependence in a few aspects of our lives (Kaplan, 1996: 19-22).

‘Maturity and interdependence is the celebration of freedom within the bounds of real constraint’ (Kaplan, 1996: 20). Kaplan suggests that this human development is a move through differentiation to integration. The dependence phase is characterised by homogeneity and ‘oneness’, while the independence phase is illustrated by separation and demarcation. The phase of interdependence is typified by conscious integration (Kaplan, 1996: 21-2). However, the benefit of this explanation of individual human development phases is not its specific detailing but rather Kaplan’s use of these three phases as a metaphor for organisational development. In Chapter Twelve, Freire’s idea of critical consciousness was addressed, but Kaplan views this as the move from dependence to independence and only partial development. Critical consciousness supports individual identity but does not encourage interdependence, thus Kaplan presents the idea of ‘organisational consciousness’ as a paramount part of reaching interdependence (1996: 22-8).

This metaphor of the three phases of development from dependency through independence to interdependence remains valuable when expanded to analyse socio-cultural development in general and the evolution of human civilisation. Analysing the evolution of the human species, it is clear that during early human history our species lived in a relationship of dependency with the natural world. In fact, for the first ninety-five percent of the two-hundred thousand year existence of our species people survived as nomadic hunter-gatherers. The transition towards a phase of independence could be

marked by the two factors of civilisation- the beginning of agriculture occurring ten thousand years ago and the beginning of city-states occurring six thousand years ago. Though the evolution of the human species since the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions starting five hundred years ago marks an advanced stage of the independence phase.

The idea that the evolution of human civilisation is in a phase of independence may not be agreeable to some, but is the language not used to suggest that scientific and technological advancements have freed us from the hardships of the natural world? Did colonisation not occur to conquer, domesticate and civilise the wild corners of the earth? And did not many of the wars fought during the last five hundred years concern independence and later the civil rights of free, autonomous individuals? This phase of independence is visible in both humanity's interaction with the natural world and within the way we currently frame relationships in human society. It is important to note though, that the independence phase of development is considered necessary to traverse if we are to reach the interdependence phase either as individuals or in social organisations. It is also quite interesting to recognise that the culture of self-differentiation during the independence phase of individual human development is often defined by being in direct conflict with the guardians of the dependant. 'It asserts itself *against* a given reality, rather than in and of itself' (Kaplan, 1996:26). In this manner, current models of economics, social development and cultural evolution seldom take into account the in-flows and out-flows that occur between the natural world and human society, while in reality the meeting of humanity's basic needs for survival are still entirely dependent on the functioning of nature's economy.

The idea of interdependence, characterised by conscious integration, highlights the challenge defined for sustainable development – establishing pathways of human development that do not compromise the natural environment's health or future generations' ability to meet their needs from this environment. Furthermore, the call for both intra-generational and inter-generational social equity is a critical recognition of the interdependence of the entire human population. One of the strongest arguments for social development based on interdependence comes from the late nineteenth

century social geographer Élisée Reclus, who in *L'Homme et la Terre* (1905) argues that humanity is evolving to become 'nature taking consciousness of itself'. John P. Clark summarises the message of Reclus's work:

[T]hat humanity must come to understand its identity as the self-consciousness of the earth, and that it must in its own historical development realise the profound implications of this identity. In effect, Reclus proposes to humanity an ethical project of taking full responsibility, through a transformed social practice, for our place in nature, and a corresponding theoretical project of more adequately understanding that place and of unmasking the ideologies that distort it (25 May 2004: internet).

Restructuring and framing development possibilities to work for conscious integration within the functioning of the greater biosphere by acknowledging the complexity of interdependent relationships humanity is a part of is the strategic challenge of sustainable development. This is not a challenge of further improving our science and technology, as much as it is a struggle to formulate an ethical system and understanding of the world that can relate to the extensive expansion of knowledge that occurred since the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions. Humanity has gained the knowledge to understand that practising development that attempts to separate us from and make us independent of nature will not sustain us and is resulting in disastrous consequences for the earth that we are dependent on. A turning point is being reached where the style of development practised under the project of modernity is acknowledged as failing to meet humanity's needs and in many cases worsening the situation. However, to manage this turning point successfully, it is necessary to look beyond ameliorative actions and toil to directly transform our understanding and purpose of development.

Near the end of Chapter Eight, it was proposed that sustainable progress may be viewed as the next generation inheriting from us a world where there is more potential/embodied energy to meet their needs based on establishing a more healthy, productive and diverse biosphere. Holmgren adds to this by suggesting, 'In the language of business, renewable resources should be seen as our sources of income, while non-renewable resources can be thought of as capital assets. Spending our capital assets for day-to-day living is unsustainable in anyone's language' (2002: 93). The idea of

development for interdependence entailing conscious integration may appear an elusive concept, but these basic steps of working to outline a definition of sustainable progress brings practicality to the subject.

Murray Bookchin, in *The Ecology of Freedom* (1982), describes the importance of how social relationships are defined with direct correspondence to promoting a more ecological worldview. This is explained while detailing the dual histories of the advancement of human civilisation with increasing systems of hierarchy and the pathways of social development that became increasingly disassociated with the natural world. In his previous work *Toward An Ecological Society* (1980), Bookchin first proposed the idea that human domination of nature will persist as long as social hierarchy exists. This idea is based on the importance of learning how to formulate specific types of relationships with regards to the developmental phases of dependence, independence and interdependence. Furthermore, he argues that human interactions with nature can be viewed as a relationship, but the learning for how we interact in this relationship is carried over from the learning of human-to-human relationships. The persistence of hierarchy and domination are specifically aided by the independence characteristics of self-differentiation, separation and demarcation. However, Bookchin also argues that the type of modern development that has resulted in such extensive adverse impacts on the natural environment is also evidence of our capacity to repair and reconstruct with much of the knowledge and technology to do so already at hand.

What we crucially lack is the consciousness and sensibility that will help us achieve such eminently desirable goals – a consciousness and sensibility far broader than customarily meant by these terms. Our definitions must include not only the ability to reason logically and respond emotionally in a humanistic fashion; they must also include a fresh awareness of the relatedness between things and an imaginative insight into the possible (Bookchin, 1982, 2005: 83).

To understand the importance of development based on interdependence, we need only to look at the complex series of links that make up the food-web of any ecosystem and to appreciate the fact that ‘symbiotic mutualism is a major factor in fostering ecological stability and organic evolution’ (Bookchin, 1982, 2005: 91) – a fact discussed extensively by the naturalist

Peter Kropotkin in *Mutual Aid: A factor of evolution* (1902) and more recently updated by William Trager in *Symbiosis* (1970).

The expansion of freedom – ‘uninhibited volition and self-consciousness’ (Bookchin, 1982, 2005: 102) – provides an interesting means for assessing the achievements of development. Amartya Sen provides a substantial framework for how freedom and its expansion can be used to generate a quantitative assessment criteria in *Development as Freedom* (1999). Sen argues that the expansion of substantive freedoms is both the primary end (i.e. the ‘constitutive role’) and the principal means (i.e. the ‘instrumental role’) of development. ‘[T]he view of freedom that is being taken here involves both the processes that allow freedom of actions and decisions, and the actual opportunities that people have, given their personal and social circumstances’ (Sen, 1999: 17). He classifies five distinct types of freedom: 1) political freedoms, 2) economic facilities, 3) social opportunities, 4) transparency guarantees, and 5) protective security (1999: 10). Extensive evidence is provided in this work to demonstrate how increases in both agency and capacity as they relate to these freedoms promote meaningful development achievements. Furthermore, it is argued that a hindrance of individual agency or capacity in any one of these five categories has corresponding negative consequences across the full development spectrum.

The above concepts of development from Kaplan, Bookchin, and Sen can be applied to provide a meaningful framework for a full analysis of the type of changes addressed by sustainable development. This change may be expressed as movement towards relationships that are based on the value of interdependence and provide mutual support and care. Progress towards interdependent relationships can be quantified by analysing the expansion of substantive freedoms that encourage strong individual agency and capacity for directing development pathways. A sense of interdependency would not only accommodate social relationships, but it would also establish a meaningful understanding of humanity’s role within the greater biosphere where the interconnections between a diversity of species is the key to stability and evolution. This in whole may be viewed as a process of conscious integration that requires education of values to form a culture that is rooted in place (i.e. ecological) and in people (i.e. social).

Let us now return to the case of Gigha and the achievements that have occurred on the island since the community buy-out. Numerous achievements have occurred on Gigha and are described in this work. The built environment and natural environment are changing in ways that are viewed as highly positive for the sustainable development of the island. However, it is unlikely that a complete replication of these activities would result in an equally beneficial outcome in another location. This, of course, is one of the real trials for advocating sustainable development, that there cannot be one blue print model for development when it must integrate with local circumstances. This does not mean though that learning from successful development scenarios from places such as Gigha is impossible. Many lessons can be learned and specific activities may even be replicated when considered appropriate to local circumstances. When we move beyond the physical achievements and outcomes of specific development projects and begin to address the significant changes occurring in regards to the culture of Gigha, it is possible to understand many social processes that are primary to the success of the sustainable development of both Gigha and more generally.

The Project Administrator for the Trust, Lorna Andrew was quoted above describing the change in the community's outlook as the most significant change on the island. The evolving culture on Gigha corresponds with the idea of a culture that motivates and moves towards interdependent relationships and works for conscious integration of the community within the local environment. While working on Gigha, it was the change in culture rather than the implementation of certain projects or even the defining of the goals for a sustainable form of development that really made me think that lasting and enduring change towards a more sustainable future was imminent. The change in culture on Gigha is directly connected to the rise in participation on the island that supported critical reflection and consciousness through a cycle of experiential learning. This learning cycle as it corresponds to active participation in the development process may be considered one of the most valuable means of engendering sustainable development. Furthermore, this process of experiential learning that enables

cultural transformation lends itself to modeling that would be more replicable than the specific development outcomes. Though the outcomes of individual sustainable development experiences remain context specific, the social processes that lead to these outcomes may be viewed as more universal.

## **12.2 Importance of Value and Paradigm Learning**

The expansion of critical consciousness is the foundation for the evolution of a culture of sustainability. The transformative learning that supports the expansion of critical consciousness may be integrated directly into the facilitation of community-led sustainable development and provides an instrumental means for establishing enduring change. In fact, the lessons learned from the development process of Gigha suggest that this cultural work deserves primary attention for the advancement of sustainable development. Experiential learning cycles occur when local people participate directly in the stages of planning development. Facilitation of this participatory planning can ensure that critical reflection and action are linked to form a praxis that directly examines the underlying values and worldviews that frame development pathways. 'The exercise of freedom is mediated by values, but the values in turn are influenced by public discussions and social interactions, which are themselves influenced by participatory freedoms' (Sen, 1999: 9).

The evolution of a culture of sustainability entails social learning at the level of values and paradigms that frame the meanings of development and progress. It is possible to view this challenge as an ethical project. Human society has advanced significantly in the last five hundred years since the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions—an era that can be defined as an advanced phase of social development as independence. Consider the ways human understanding has evolved during this period—our knowledge and meaning of world around us is radically different than what existed in the Middle Ages. However, though there has been momentous advancement of scientific knowledge and industrial technologies, the main



ethical systems that endure at present in human society are predominantly formations of a prior era when human understanding of the wider biosphere was improvident at best. It is difficult to specifically identify a predominant ethical/moral system that incorporates the advanced understandings of the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions into their approach. The work of the Enlightenment philosophers of the eighteenth century may be viewed as the most exhaustive attempt to establish an advanced ethical system. The Enlightenment philosophers had an obvious effect on the infrastructure of state institutions, and it is possible to explain the importance of democracy and market forces within the functioning of these institutions as part of the ethical legacy of these philosophers. The concentration of Enlightenment philosophy on the social contract though approached humanity as an almost separate entity from nature. Michel Foucault, in *Madness and Civilisation* (1961), addressed how reason and rationality depended on creating an idea of unreason. This was defined by what was considered subhuman which often related to the state of nature or the wild—something civilised humanity was perceived as evolving beyond, and this action highlights the culture of self-differentiation that prevails during the independence phase of development.

The ethical philosophies of the Enlightenment are problematic because of the strong differentiation that is made between the 'state of nature' and the civilised nation-state. This independence between humanity and nature does not incorporate the modern scientific understanding of an interdependent biosphere that has only recently come to the forefront of academic/scientific thinking. Transitions are occurring in academia to move towards whole systems thinking and away from rational, linear thinking, but these ideas are not yet incorporated into an ethical/moral system for framing humanity's development possibilities. It is not the purpose here to attempt to present a full ethical system that corresponds to sustainable development. In fact, this type of ethical system can be seen evolving naturally on Gigha through experiential learning and the increase of critical consciousness/reflection that includes a direct questioning of previously held values/worldviews. To this end, it must be questioned if a formulaic detailing of the ethics of sustainable development is completely necessary or if it is better to

inspire/facilitate its natural evolution at individual and local levels. However, there is purpose in suggesting that the lack of a modern ethic that incorporates an understanding of interdependency is problematic for the advancement of sustainable development.

The main reason for discussing the ethical level of the challenge for sustainable development is to open an analysis of the social processes that lead to a revaluation of ethical systems in general and the establishment of a culture of sustainability specifically. Future attempts to detail the progression of ethical systems and a movement towards an ethics of sustainable development may gain insight from both Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* (1949) and Peter Kropotkin's *Ethics: Origin and development* (1924). Both works are important precursors to establishing a modern ethic based on a modern, scientific understanding of the world we live in. Leopold's 'Land Ethic' is a powerful essay on not only the furthering of an 'ecological conscience' but also how to formulate conservation education to promote this ethic. Kropotkin endeavors to demonstrate how the study of ethics is a concrete scientific discipline that can be based on principles of natural and social reality. He advocated an ethical system that is grounded in his understanding of mutual aid as a predominant factor in natural evolution thus challenging directly the amorality of social Darwinists. In fact, Kropotkin held the view that, 'For the first time in the history of civilization, mankind has reached a point where the means of satisfying its needs are in excess of the needs themselves ... [thus] well-being can be secured for all ... and humanity can at last rebuild its entire social life on the bases of justice' (1968: 2).

Kropotkin also helps to explain why the study of social processes that promote sustainable development is key to this work, 'The function of ethics is not even so much to insist upon the defects of man, and to reproach him with his "sins", as to act in the *positive* direction, by appealing to man's best instincts' (1968: 25). The purpose of analysing the social processes that are identified as supporting sustainable development is because these processes are viewed as the social infrastructure that supports the proliferation of a culture of sustainability. The natural evolution of a culture of sustainability on Gigha was not demanded of the population through the dogmatic control

of a director but rather grew out of the participatory development process that engaged the local community to directly examine and detail their own values for development and progress. Furthermore, this was a process that was facilitated by the support of trained professionals and significant scientific knowledge about the reality of both the natural and social environments that development is taking place within. It is significant to acknowledge that this pathway of sustainable development was a freely chosen projection by the people when given agency and capacity to lead their own development-process.

Though I personally have not worked with another development process as extensive and broad ranging as was the process on Gigha, I have participated in aspects of decision-making, planning, and facilitation in other projects and was able to recognise similar learning outcomes from these processes. In most cases, just as the development processes were not as extensive, the learning outcomes and overall successes were not as complete. However, my time on Gigha really made apparent the strength of these three social processes and their connection to value learning for initiating the transformation towards a culture of sustainability. Decision-making, planning and facilitation are not put forth in this work as the exclusive social processes for supporting sustainable development, but rather as the processes that were clearly meaningful for the success that occurred on Gigha and in parallel the areas that the Gigha study provides significant insight into. Some observers may identify other social processes as equally important and may also see my own categorisations as needing further subdividing.

The value learning that occurs through these three social processes is discussed in Chapter Eleven. *Advocating cooperation, creating vision, and inspiring enthusiasm* are held as primary features of establishing experiential learning cycles that support the formation of a culture of sustainability. Experiential learning is coupled with the idea of meso-level analysis to explain how local micro-level experience can be guided by meta-level knowledge/theories of sustainable development – furthermore how this experience creates strong praxis that encourages conscientisation through critical reflection. It is this conscientisation and critical reflection that should

be understood as the driving forces behind the evolving culture on Gigha. This culture is not formulated under hegemonic persuasion, but rather it is a culture that is rooted in a modern, scientific understanding of the world and development pathways that gained significant guidance through sympathetic professional facilitation. Interestingly, it is also a culture that is strongly rooted in place and in people with a commitment to the natural and cultural heritages of the island. The traditional sentimentality of rural cultures is often viewed as at odds with the rationality of scientific thinking, but Gigha's example demonstrates a form in which the holistic thinking of sustainable development gains considerable meaning and depth when connected with the 'sentiments' of a local culture that holds a rich indigenous knowledge system that understands the assets of the local community and environment.

The idea of establishing design principles for planning sustainable development is discussed in Chapter Five with an argument similar to Kropotkin's in *Ethics* that modern natural and social science principles could be applied to guide development activities in a manner that is responsible to both the natural and social environments. It is argued that planning and designing for a sustainable future does not occur by happenstance, instead clarity and direction is needed to support an understanding of what leads to sustainable development. If we consider that these design principles relate directly to the values that embody a culture of sustainability, then it is appropriate to consider how we can pattern our social processes on these design principles because the social processes an individual engages with form the basic infrastructure through which cultural learning and transformation occurs. If social processes can engender the values that lead to a culture of sustainability, then learning to interact with development in an interdependent manner becomes a norm of socialisation. Education within the classroom will need to incorporate the sustainability paradigm and become a key social process for cultural transformation, but we must also extend our concept of education to incorporate the day-to-day experiential learning that occurs through acting in and with the world around us. It is this learning that is heavily influenced by the social infrastructure that predicates the possibilities of how that interaction occurs.

Table Eight presents a review of the important features of these social processes for supporting sustainable development.

<b>Table Eight: Social Processes for supporting Sustainable Development</b>		
	<b>Main Objectives</b>	<b>Learning Features</b>
<b>Decision Making</b>	Effective means for participation and forming collaborative agreements	Spirit of Cooperation, Appreciation of mutual aid, Establishing common goals
<b>Planning</b>	Ability to assess current situation, envision the desired future, and establish courses of action to reach this future	Individual potential in development planning and management. Desire to work for change and improvement. Establishing common objectives for reaching the desired future.
<b>Facilitation</b>	Provision of strong agency and capacity to strengthen community-led development	Sense of ownership and responsibility. Sense of interdependence.
<b>Experiential Learning</b>	Establishing critical reflection and action as means to praxis	Rise in critical consciousness that encourages direct examination of underlying values and ideologies

### **12.3 Readdressing the Research Questions: Applying a Learning Model**

The beginnings of this research were based on the aim: *To investigate the practices used by a community in their attempts to make the transition to a more sustainable form of development and to consider what are the important processes that support this work.* The Isle of Gigha case study was chosen because it represented both a radical transition in the way in which development is structured and also a model of community-led sustainable development that had potential to provide generalised insight that would support other attempts at sustainable development. The uniqueness of the Isle of Gigha case study must not be overlooked. This case study provided a very rare and unprecedented opportunity to investigate the attempts of a small, isolated community to take control of and manage their own process of development. The research produced many specific findings from Gigha that may have little application for other sustainable development projects, and in this sense much of the detailing of the development work that has occurred on Gigha must be read as the novel

story of one community pursuing an unconventional course of action to promote/secure their own way of life. However, the Gigha case study is not completely alone in the history of community buy-outs or the move towards sustainable development. The belief was taken in this work that Gigha does provide an exceptional model, but one that has many lessons worth emulating. Beyond the specific detailing of the practices that occurred in this case study, there was also the hope that there are many general insights about how social processes support sustainable development that can strengthen the wider pursuit for sustainability.

The findings of this work that are specific to the Gigha case study were based on the detailing of the practices and activities undertaken by the people of Gigha and the Trust to secure sustainable development on the island. These correspond with the first research question that was posed in the Introduction: *What are the practical means a community employs in their attempt to develop in a sustainable manner?* The detailing of specific practices that occurred on Gigha relate mainly to the three thematic sections of this work: decision-making, planning and professional facilitation. This work described the models, methods and practices employed on Gigha that aided in their movement towards sustainable development. Connections were also drawn between what occurred in practice on Gigha and wider transitions in participation, cooperative inquiry, planning theory, conceptualisations of social progress, and the role of development practitioners. Furthermore, though the type of development that occurred on Gigha does not provide a blue-print model for sustainable development, it does vindicate the concept of community-led sustainable development by providing a story of success.

The detailing of the specific practices that occurred on Gigha in regards to decision-making, planning, and professional facilitation are substantial, and there is no need to review them in entirety here. Rather, it is important now to highlight the findings from the practices that had significant influence on the analysis of these three social processes as important foundations for supporting community-led sustainable development. In fact, the framing of the thematic parts of this thesis around

these three social processes originated because these were the most significant ones observed in the practices for sustainable development on Gigha. It is also necessary to note that though the research questions can be framed with a clear distinction between practice and process, in reality this delineation is at times much more vague and readily overlaps thus findings based on Gigha-specific practices will also contain lessons about general processes and vice-versa.

The practices of decision-making on Gigha provided three significant findings. First, it was clear that finding a model for participatory decision-making that would support the needs of the people on Gigha was a difficult task, and that there is a general lack of recognised models for the type of direct and deliberative democracy for small communities wanting to substantially increase the potential for open participation in decision-making to emulate. Second, it was documented how people felt unable to fully participate in the decision-making over Trust activities, and how this led to some of the most visible tensions within the community. The attempts made to adapt the decision-making system to provide more opportunities for participation and the resulting rise in members taking active responsibility over parts of the development process highlighted how important and valuable the process of participatory decision-making is for local-level sustainable development. Third, the importance of informal interactions and participation in working groups on Gigha provided an understanding of the ease at which people engage in “political” decision-making in familiar, face-to-face interactions and the benefits this has for creating meaning and local deliberation. Based on these three findings, a vision of sustainable decision-making that adapts practices of consensus decision-making and deliberative democracy was advocated in order to provide a framework for supporting local-level participation and cooperation in decision-making processes.

The lengthy planning process that occurred on Gigha was documented in Part Two of this work and demonstrated the extensive and intricate level of detail that the people of Gigha and the Trust undertook to ensure they follow a pathway of development that is sustainable. The most important finding that was gained from the practice of planning on Gigha

was the strength of a holistic system of planning for ensuring sustainable development. Many efforts were made to ensure that the practice of planning on Gigha concerned not only livelihoods but also quality of life, natural heritage and cultural heritage. Furthermore, the planning process as a whole was designed to cover a diverse and holistic basis and to provide for integration between these separate areas. From the analysis of the planning process on Gigha, it was possible to distinguish the four main stages of a sustainable development planning process which include the more unique initial stage of 'Envisioning the Future' and the final stage 'Monitoring and Evaluating Development'. This analysis led to recognition of the complexities of sustainable development, and the challenge / potential for insuring that multiple needs and areas of focus are addressed in the one process.

A second important finding was apparent from the analysis of the practice of planning on Gigha that concerned the means for providing guidance for planning in a manner that supports sustainability. Several design principles were highlighted in Chapter Five as factors that can guide sustainable development planning. In Chapter Eight, it was explained how the combination of meta-level design principles and micro-level, community defined goals / priorities may provide both the rigor of academic understanding and the appropriateness for local circumstances that is necessary to ensure sustainable development. This also led to recognition of the difficulty of turning theoretical understandings of sustainability into practical steps for action, and provided the stimulus for the discussion of meso-level sustainability as a mid-ground between theory and practice.

Part Three of this work detailed in general how professionals work with sustainable development, and how in practice professionals have facilitated the community-led development work on Gigha. The successful work of facilitators to support the people of Gigha to become the primary leaders of the sustainable development of their island provided a practical description of how lasting change may be encouraged through interacting with local interests. The analysis of the practice of professional facilitation on Gigha provided the valuable finding of how increases in local agency and



capacity may be viewed as a main goal for securing community-led sustainable development. It was further highlighted how this work to put average citizens in the role of active and responsible participants in the development of their local communities decreases dependency and supports self-sufficiency. Finally, we saw through an analysis based on experiential learning how social processes may be shaped to support participation, reflective/adaptive knowledge capacities, and local cultures of sustainability.

This of course moved us into the wider discussion on process because the more general findings of this work were based on the analysis of how social processes may serve as a form of experiential learning and to increase understandings of sustainable development. These correspond to the second research question: *What are the important social processes that support community-led sustainable development?* The description of the model of professional facilitation that has occurred on Gigha was followed by an analysis of how this model supports a process of experiential learning and critical praxis that is the key to solving the functionality of a strong meso-level basis for sustainable development. Working with local agency and capacity building may be viewed as one of the key educational projects needed to support sustainable development. Several learning features/objectives that the engendering of experiential learning in community-led sustainable development can generate were highlighted.

'Advocating cooperation' was considered an important objective for sustainable development because it supports the basis of participatory action to plan and manage local development activities. The link between advocating cooperation and specific types of decision-making systems was drawn with a focus on those systems that support collective deliberation and communicative discourse. 'Creating vision' was presented as a learning feature that arises from participatory planning processes for community-led sustainable development. A well structured planning process should include methods to analyse forces of change and understand local circumstances thus providing communities with the knowledge capacity to ensure relevant and timely decision-making. Forming common vision also aids in encouraging individuals to view themselves as valuable assets for

social change. 'Inspiring enthusiasm' was a third noted learning feature that is supported through professional facilitation by empowering a sense of ownership. With a sense of ownership, personal responsibility and accountability were viewed as important learning features. Finally, 'securing appropriate knowledge' was provided as an important objective if communities are to lead a sustainable development programme that is well-founded. This objective may be fulfilled through direct knowledge transfer from professionals to local people. However, the establishment of planning methods that clarify and elucidate the stages of sustainable development for local people while generating cycles of critical reflection and cooperative inquiry was advocated as a more substantial means for securing continued knowledge learning.

Transformative change was contrasted with ameliorative change to demonstrate how one of the primary challenges for sustainable development is a reassessment of value systems and worldviews that structure development trajectories. This requires second-order, transformative change that directly effects the underpinning ideologies of a system. A significant connection was drawn between the rise in the critical consciousness among the members of a community and the potential for transformative change. Community-led sustainable development can be structured to create a process of critical, reflective praxis and a 'practical knowledge grounded in everyday experience' (Ledwith, 2005: 28).

It was possible to advocate from this understanding of transformative change for sustainable development a process that will support the rise of an ethic and value-systems based on the concepts of sustainable development. The other general findings of this work provided several social processes that can support meaningful social change and may be furthered to advance understanding of sustainable development. By basing the analysis of social processes in the context of experiential learning, it was possible to outline several important processes for engendering critical consciousness and transformative change. It was also advocated that the formation of critical consciousness at the local level is where the difficulty of the meso-level may find strong connection between meta-theory and practical applications.

The first key finding presented for engendering social change was the importance of active participation in and discursive communication with group members about the shaping of the social world. Unless individuals are involved and deliberating in this process, then critical praxis will not be initiated. The second key finding was establishing local agency and capacity so communities may become the leaders of their own development process. A well structured planning process may be used to provide a positive basis for understanding and working with sustainable development. Furthermore, it was argued that it is through the planning process that people can learn both about general principles/ethics of sustainability and about specific techniques/methodologies to plan and implement development initiatives. The third key finding presented was the specific work of experiential learning and a reassessment of concepts of social progress. Critical praxis occurs through participation and reflection, but both need secured within the institutions for social life and political decision-making. It was discussed how this is possible in both decision-making systems and planning systems, and it was also discussed how this type of action learning/education work has significant potential for reducing social dependency. We concluded with a discussion of how a culture of sustainability must be built on providing substantive freedoms to individuals and a move towards interdependence and conscious integration. This cultural project is one in which experiential learning must play a prominent role in transforming towards sustainability.

The final research question of this work posed: *How does the local level analysis correspond with the critical theory analysis of contemporary development paradigms?* In Chapter Nine, it was explained how the original challenge for proponents of sustainable development was finding legitimate ground to stand upon to discuss alternative development models. The contemporary development paradigm of modernity advocates a linear model of development that is preordained, evolutionary and moving towards the end-state of the high consumption society. Proponents of sustainable development had to argue that development is a human controlled process, and that we must consider both opportunities for social progress and responsibility for our actions. One of the main lessons learned

from this analysis was that the implementation and management of sustainable development is a political act. Based on a Foucauldian analysis, we considered how discursive communication is a political act, and it is the dynamic of power/knowledge relationships that shapes the structure, language and meaning of the world around us. The framing of development paradigms is a highly influential action because it proves to be one of the most pervasive social ideologies.

As with any development paradigm, sustainable development can be embraced or ignored and this is a political action. However, what was also made clear is that pervasive social ideologies do not change easily, and the formation of a culture of sustainability requires a paradigm shift. This is not the type of social change that will occur through top-down policies. This social change requires individuals to enter a process of critical praxis that directly engages with prevailing ideologies and worldviews. This is actively facilitated by strengthening individuals' abilities to participate in development processes. Viewing sustainable development from a political perspective, it is necessary to consider how the public sphere may be expanded so each person can participate in the political processes that shape the society we live in. Furthermore, it is possible to expand an experiential learning model to encapsulate the social processes that people engage with in the public sphere where they can actively participate in transformative change towards sustainability.

### 12.3.1 Applying a Holistic Model of Analysis-

The interdisciplinary approach to the research and analysis in this thesis is important to note for it allowed for some of the most meaningful findings of this work. Two main structures were used in this work to provide the basis for an interdisciplinary analysis. The first structure was the three thematic sections of this work based on the social processes that proved vital in the process of community-led sustainable development on Gigha: decision-making, planning and professional facilitation. The second structure was the multiple approaches to investigation that were applied in each thematic section. Each social process was first discussed in relation to

the global context of development paradigms and sustainability employing a critical theory analysis to unmask the traditional ideologies that have shaped development discourse. Each social process was secondly placed in the local context of the Gigha study and the details of the specific activities that have occurred were accounted. This local analysis attempted to elucidate the methods that produced positive and negative results for the overall development process. Finally, applying a learning model, an investigation was made into how each of these social processes may be strengthened to provide meaningful support for transformative change towards sustainability.

The research methodology employed during the case study must also be considered for the benefits they had in enhancing the interdisciplinary nature of this work. Participatory action research and co-operative inquiry were selected as the methodologies for securing valid understandings of the community's process of sustainable development. Because cooperative inquiry and action learning provided methods to incorporate the ability to create knowledge in action, better engagement and interaction with the community and the development process was allowed for. Furthermore, a key objective of this methodology steps beyond mere knowledge extraction and works to support human potential and power equalisation. These methodologies allow the researcher to act directly with groups of people as a 'co-learner', and real meaning is based not on abstract theorisation but on the practical solutions developed in the group. The real benefit of this methodology was that it provided the opportunity to not only record the specific details of development activities, but it also allowed an opportunity to directly experience the learning that people experienced while actively participating in these social processes.

The interdisciplinary approach to this research provided strong connections between establishing development that is ecologically sensitive guided by natural science understandings and the social processes that shape the framing of development activities. The importance of a social science basis to sustainable development was also made clear because at the core of it development must be recognised as a social process rather than a

environmental process. Of course, sustainable development needs to take account of the wider ecosystem and incorporate a strong natural science understanding, but the actual work is part of building and adapting society to better meet human needs in a way that does not degenerate the ecosystem. This work was able to provide three valuable analyses of the importance of social processes in supporting sustainable development by discussing the critical context in which political acts shape development discourse and worldviews, by elaborating the specific practical techniques implemented on Gigha, and by providing a learning model for deepening the beneficial effects these social processes have. Without an interdisciplinary approach to the analysis in this work, it would have been difficult to provide the critical theory analysis of the global context of development paradigms while still drawing connections to the specific activities that occurred on Gigha. Without an interdisciplinary approach to the research methodology, it would have been impossible to gain an understanding of the experiential learning that these social processes engendered. Thus, in many ways the interdisciplinary approach to this work saved it from being only a dry detailing of what occurred on Gigha and led to the more general findings that can support wider attempts at sustainable development.

Based on my personal experience conducting the research and preparing this work, I would have found it almost impossible to produce this if I was limited to one disciplinary framework of thinking. As we have seen, the development process on Gigha is very holistic in nature and covers a wide range of issues that span across the study of the natural sciences and the social sciences, thus no one disciplinary framework should be expected to effectively cover all the areas of sustainable development. My work focused heavily on the social science side of the development process, and though a natural science understanding of sustainable development provided beneficial context in carrying out the field research it was not pivotal to the analysis of social processes for supporting sustainable development. However, within the social science framework ideas were readily drawn from across disciplinary boundaries. This was necessary to review the three social processes for their various effects whether they were political, psycho-

emotional, economic, educational, or social and structuralist/ institutionalising in nature. Such was the review with decision-making processes that demonstrated how political actions shape relationships, provide a specific language of discourse, support individual self-fulfillment through participation and also can provide learning opportunities for improving cooperative actions.

The experiential learning model provided a foundation to the interdisciplinary approach in this work for it led to a deeper understanding of each social process that recognised the potential they hold for engendering transformative change. An understanding of the cyclical nature of critical praxis and a recognition of the importance of agency and capacity increases in local communities provided two other key features for propelling this learning model. Furthermore, the learning model was expanded to cover the idea of a culture of sustainability and directly address the values and ethics that must coincide with second-order change of modern development trajectories. An interdisciplinary approach facilitated this movement of analysis in multiple directions at the same time, whereas empiricist methodologies require linear structures of analysis based on cause-effect relationships. In this manner, it became possible to study how social processes effect transformative change in multiple ways: 1) encouraging active participation in the structuring of the social world, 2) establishing new knowledge through critical praxis, 3) directly examining prevailing worldviews, 4) increasing local agency and capacity to better self-manage development activities, and 5) providing a means to initiate a strong meso-level functionality for sustainable development by connecting theory with practice.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that working in an interdisciplinary manner or applying a holistic model is critical for sustainable development work in general. Especially when carried out at a local-level, needed projects/ activities will cover a wide range of topics. These diverse topics may be visible without a holistic model, but it will be very difficult to provide proper integration of these projects if an interdisciplinary approach is not taken. By allowing a community to establish their own goals and

priorities for development, it is possible to acknowledge the various needs and desires within the given community. However, it is also necessary to consider how individual projects can build a strong social infrastructure that becomes the foundation for sustainable development. Reviewing the aspects of an individual project for the achievements/ outcomes it will produce in support of sustainable development requires a holistic analysis that considers its impacts on both social and environmental factors. Furthermore, if an experiential learning model of community-led sustainable development is to be advocated, then it becomes necessary to be able to employ the multi-directional analysis that an interdisciplinary approach allows for. It is necessary to review the learning features that occur as people interact with development processes, and at the same time it is also necessary to contextualise these development processes in a manner that resolves and critiques the current development paradigms that shape and structure meaning.

The work of sustainable development is based on a continual interplay between meta-level theory and micro-level practice that interacts in a type of critical praxis. Meta-theories challenge traditional development trajectories and provide wider understanding of the impacts of human activities. Meta-level understanding can also provide a generalised set of principles for designing and planning in a manner that is sustainable. While micro-practice provides the real testing ground where activities and projects are implemented proving them either successful or faulty. Many of the really innovative findings about sustainable development are actually generated at the micro-level where activities can slowly be manipulated/ adapted to provide better results and service. This work has highlighted the importance of the meso-level for sustainable development as the place where theory and practice are bonded in a process of critical praxis. Furthermore, community was recognised as a key feature in establishing a vibrant meso-level functionality for sustainable development. However, to support critical praxis in communities of inquiry depends on facilitating multiple and diverse variables in a single process. A social process can be adapted to support participation, encourage reflection, strengthen knowledge capacities,



and provide valuable methodologies for analysis and implementation, but this model of social processes as proponents of experiential learning requires a consideration of a diverse range factors that are not appropriate to one disciplinary framework. These social processes must be viewed as part of a political process that is both shaped by members of society and influences the exact same peoples' way of thinking and behaving. Not only must the political nature of these social processes be considered, but there are important features concerning individual development for self-fulfillment and interdependence along with other factors that are integral to the shaping of the social world. All of these factors must be considered in an integrated fashion and thus obligates an interdisciplinary approach.

## **12.4 Conclusion**

*"This is a moral moment. This is not ultimately about any scientific debate or political dialogue. Ultimately it is about who we are as human beings. It is about our capacity to transcend our own limitations. To rise to this new occasion. To see with our hearts, as well as our heads, the unprecedented response that is now called for. To disenthral ourselves, to shed the illusions that have been our accomplices in ignoring the warnings that were clearly given, and hearing the ones that are clearly given now."*

- Al Gore (Former U.S.A. Vice President) at the National Sierra Club Convention in San Francisco on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2005).

Now it is possible to recognise that the real challenge for sustainable development is one that demands conscious examination of the ethics and values that bring meaning to humanity's concepts of development and progress. Science and technology can provide us means to live in a sustainable manner, but it is human choice that decides to implement them and format development in a way that promotes sustainability. In Bookchin's words we need 'a consciousness and sensibility far broader than customarily meant by these terms'. Living in a dependant manner with nature was not a choice for early hunter-gatherers, but we can in one manner view the attempt to live independent of nature through the recent human history of civilisation as a conscious and active choice. Though in another manner it can be argued that this independence of nature is a falsehood and humanity has no ability to escape its dependence on nature. This aside, let us consider that if the move to independence is an active choice then also

interdependence can be viewed the same. These transitions to independence and interdependence are of course supported and made possible by the expansion of human knowledge, but at this point it would be difficult to argue that humanity still does not possess the knowledge to live and develop in an interdependent manner with nature. What is clearly lacking is the passion and determination to make this transition a reality. This is not a statement for despair though, in fact it is one of hope because we can acknowledge that all factors are there to make a transition to sustainable development and interdependence except the final emotive and ethical desire to do so.

Humanity is at a historical turning point and is faced with a great challenge. Awareness of this challenge has risen significantly over the last decade, and correspondingly but more slowly an understanding of how to deal with this challenge is also emerging. The factor that has apparently gained little mainstream awareness is the original basis for unsustainable forms of development within our modern values, worldviews and paradigms for human development and progress. This connects to a second and more important factor that sustainable development requires a direct transformation of these values, worldviews and paradigms towards one that encompasses humanity as a member of the greater interdependent biosphere. The challenge for sustainable development should be foremost viewed as an ethical / moral project, and it should be seen as a project of creating something better and more harmonious rather than merely escaping disaster.

The importance of a *new dawn of a culture of sustainability* must not be overlooked. The ethical project of sustainable development may evolve organically, but only when appropriate conditions prevail. It is possible to structure these conditions by carefully designing social infrastructures so that they permeate the values and lessons that are necessary to understand sustainable development and its imperative. To consider this challenge as simplistic would be a mistake for it is a labour of redefining what it means to be human or better yet what it means to be a member of the greater biosphere and to formulate a new sense of social progress that is compatible with a sense of interdependency. This is why such importance is placed on

an analysis of social processes and their link to experiential learning because this exposes the domain of cultural values and worldviews to critical reflection. Without a genuine reformulation of these values and worldviews, any attempt at sustainable development will remain an ameliorative act rather than a transformative act.

The Isle of Gigha provides a radical case of cultural transformation. In a matter of only a few years, the bondages of lairdism were cast off and the shadows of this system that lingered in the values of those who had been subjects of the laird were challenged and abandoned. In its place, the people of Gigha have as a community built up an island that is not only physically richer and more prosperous than before, but they also brought life to a new culture that is deeply rooted in an ethic of interdependence between the land, the sea, and the people who have survived from it for uncountable generations. There is both a modern and ancient wisdom that prevails in this culture. The 'Dancing Ladies of Gigha: Faith, Hope and Charity'—the three wind turbines now stand on the same ridge where the Bodach and the Cailleach—the standing stones that represent the spirits of the old man and old woman that roam the moorland have stood since ancient times. These symbols of new and old can be seen side-by-side across the island, and the pride of the people on Gigha is great towards both alike. This is a culture that advanced forth because people were willing to participate in the long process of discussing and planning for a future that would live up to their hopes and desires, and also because the people of Gigha received significant facilitation from the government and development specialists to increase the agency and the capacity to plan and manage their own process of sustainable development. The dedication of the people of Gigha to labour without rest towards making their vision a reality is inspiring, and the work of the "professionals" to strengthen the development process initiated by the people is not only commendable but also provides valuable lessons for encouraging sustainability in general.

The Isle of Gigha presents an exceptional case for studying the potential of community-led sustainable development. Valuable lessons can be learned both about how a community can actively lead a sustainable development process and how that community can be supported through a

network of professional agencies to ensure the high quality of the development process. This work argues the importance of local level planning for sustainable development through the active participation of community groups, but it also acknowledges that Gigha's success is partially due to the fact that the community is part of a wider social network in Scotland that is currently undergoing significant transitions towards more sustainable forms of development.

The main purposes of this work were to examine the social processes that are important for encouraging community-led sustainable development and to suggest means for better supporting these processes. The social processes of decision-making, planning and facilitating sustainable development were identified as those processes that are significant for the development work on Gigha. The examination of these processes present avenues for strengthening an infrastructure that encourages community-led sustainable development, but these social processes along with experiential learning also provide valuable arenas for engendering value learning that is necessary for the cultural transition towards sustainability and includes the important redefinitions of the concepts of development and social progress.

As a unique and exceptional case, the Isle of Gigha provides a progressive course of action for sustainable development. However, it also results in a case study that lacks a broad level of generalisation. The fact that there is a strong community network on Gigha that is geographically self-confined is a major factor in this case providing a unique study of the potentials for community-led sustainable development. Generally, this type of strong community network, especially one that is geographically defined, is difficult to identify, thus making the challenge of community-led development substantially more problematic. This does not undermine the importance of local-level participation through community networks for advancing sustainable development that is advocated in this work, but it does challenge the potential replication of the processes that supported success on Gigha further afield. The small size of the population on Gigha is another important factor for achieving high levels of active participation and community decision-making in the planning and management of the development process, but this will likely prove a challenge for the scalability

of these findings to larger populations. The study of Gigha remains valuable for identifying those social processes that support a community actively engaging with the development process of their locale and also examining means for professionals to better facilitate this type of process. However, as with any case of sustainable development, it is a mistake to believe that direct replication of the processes and projects carried out on Gigha would result in an equal level of success in different circumstances.

The analysis of the social processes that support community-led sustainable development are provided: first, to demonstrate the importance of social activities and infrastructures in shaping our value systems and the way we develop; second, to suggest means for encouraging cultural transitions that support sustainable development; and third, to provide a model for securing sustainable development that better lends itself to generalisation and replication. However, the models presented for framing these social processes to initiate experiential learning, value/belief assessment, and cultural change are not considered inflexible or absolute, nor are they suggested as comprehensively including all social processes that are universally important for sustainable development. Rather, these are the processes about which valuable lessons were gained from the Gigha case study and are identified as avenues for further research and practical application. It is impossible to determine the real worth of the analysis presented in this work based solely on the Gigha case study, but further examination and application of these ideas in real world situations will provide valuable elucidation to both the practicality of this analysis and to the profundity of these social processes as part of a model for encouraging lasting change towards sustainability. Nonetheless, it is my hope that this work has provided valuable insights into the ethical and cultural challenges that are part of sustainable development, and further provides a sensible approach to begin to investigate and model how this transition may be encouraged throughout wider society.

*"Science...shows us the means to embellish the earth's surface and to make of it the garden dreamed of by the poets of all the ages...[but] it alone cannot finish the great work. To progress in knowledge must correspond moral progress...The traits of the planet will not have their complete harmony if men are not first united in a concert of justice and peace. To become truly beautiful, the 'beneficent mother' must wait until her sons embrace each others as brothers and until they have finally concluded the great federation of free peoples."*

- Élisée Reclus

(from *La Terre*, 1869; cited in Dunbar, Gary S. *Élisée Reclus: Historian of nature*. 1978: 48)



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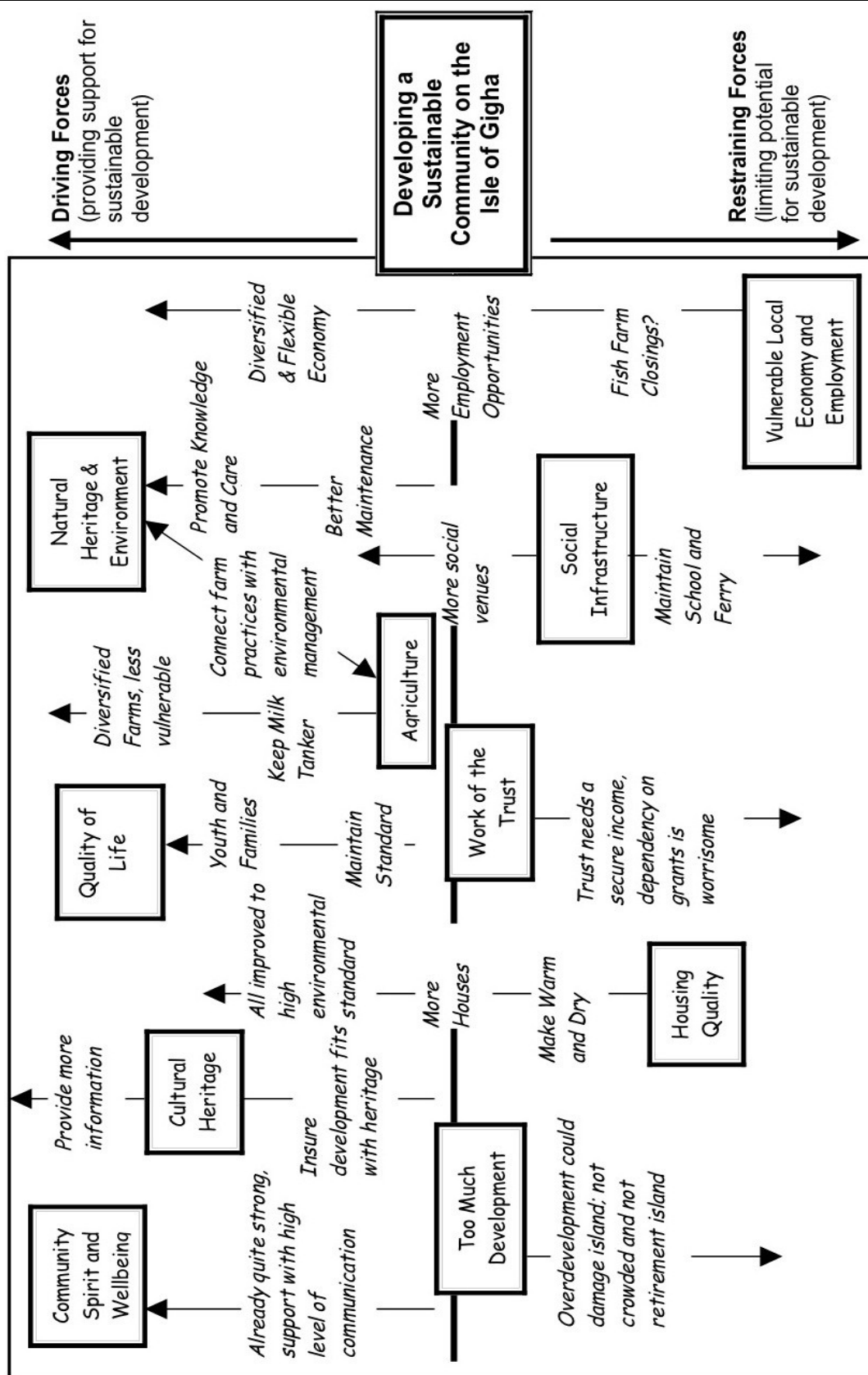
## APPENDIX A: SOME GUIDELINES FOR REACHING CONSENSUS

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*(Copied in whole from Steward Community Woodland On-line Resources)*  
<http://www.stewardwood.org/resources/DIYconsensus.htm>

- Present your position as lucidly and logically as possible, but listen to other members' reactions and consider them carefully before you press your point. Avoid arguing solely for your own ideas.
- Do not assume that someone must win and someone must lose when discussion reaches stalemate. Instead look for the next-most-acceptable alternative for all parties.
- Distinguish between major objections and discomfiture or amendments. A major objection is a fundamental disagreement with the core of the proposal.
- Do not change your mind simply to avoid conflict and to reach agreement and harmony. When agreement seems to come too quickly and easily, be suspicious, explore the reasons and be sure that everyone accepts the solution for basically similar or complementary reasons. Yield only to the positions that have objective and logically sound foundations.
- Avoid conflict-reducing techniques such as majority vote, averages, and bargaining. When a dissenting member finally agrees, don't feel that s/he must be rewarded by having her own way on some later point.
- Differences of opinion are natural and expected. Seek them out and try to involve everyone in the decision process. Disagreements can help the group's decision because with a wide range of information and opinions, there is a greater chance the group will hit on more adequate solutions.
- Decision-making through consensus involves discussion and accountability of view points as opposed to power struggles. Postponement of decisions to give time to reconsider and recognize that all people participating are able to accept and work with the decision is vital to the consensus process.
- Remember that the ideal present behind consensus is empowering versus overpowering, agreement versus majorities/minorities. The process of consensus is what you put into it as an individual and a part of the group.
- Finally, use your minds -- you've got good ones or you wouldn't be here. So think before you speak; listen before you object. Through participating in the consensus process, one can gain insight into not only others but also ones self.

## APPENDIX B: FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS, USED BY MEMBERS OF IGH TO DEFINE GOALS AND PRIORITIES OF DEVELOPMENT



## APPENDIX C: INDICATORS FOR MONITORING DEVELOPMENT

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### **Local Indicators-**

Community based, highly integrated to goals, and strongly suggest action points

- *What are the immediate concerns of the community?*
- *What types of changes clearly link to the development goals?*
- Percentage of population feeling secure with their livelihood
- Percentage of houses that are warm and dry
- Percentage of residents on Gigha who plan to stay for the next five years
- Number of events at the school to involve the children directly in Gigha's development process
- Number of social events that occur in the Community Hall each year
- Are you able to meet your basic financial needs on your present income?
- How often do residents see or hear a cuckoo on Gigha
- Community opinion of the development process: 'Are you satisfied with the general progress, development and improvement on Gigha over the past year?'
- Quality of maintenance of dykes and ditches on Gigha

### **Cross-Community Indicators-**

Address primary areas of sustainable development and allow for comparison of information with other communities involved in sustainability

- *What are the goals of sustainable development?*
- *What signifies becoming more sustainable?*
- Annual electric consumption on Gigha
- Is Gigha the place you are raising or would prefer to raise your family?
- Number of employment opportunities on Gigha, number of full-time jobs, number of part-time jobs
- Number of Primary Employers on Gigha (self-employed counted as individual employers)
- Annual Revenue for the Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust and its subsidiary companies
- Number of public spaces on island for social interaction
- How many people from Gigha attended supported vocational training, apprenticeships and continuing education courses over the past year?
- Frequency of public/Trust meetings and attendance level at those meetings
- Level of Participation in Elections (percentage of members participating in elections)
- Level of community involvement in working groups and sub-committees (number of positions served and number of people serving)

### **Context Indicators-**

Census-style data for easy external usage

- *What census-style information is important to understanding the community and the environment on Gigha*

- Overall population of Gigha
- Average household size
- Age spread of population
- Number of students in the primary school
- Overall mileage of path network on island
- Amount of information available on cultural history and sites of special interest
- Percentage of overall land outside of the development area
- Number of permanently occupied dwelling houses on island

### **Long-Term Indicators-**

Express community's long-term vision and goals of sustainable development

- *What are the long-term visions, goals, and dreams for Gigha?*
- *What 'benchmarks' will feel like real achievements?*

- Percentage of electricity consumed on Gigha that is produced renewably on Gigha
- Number of children deciding to remain on/return to Gigha: 'Did you (or your spouse) grow up on Gigha?'
- Amount of houses that have been built, remodeled and/or refurbished at a high environmental standard
- Number of major annual social events on Gigha and the number of people who attend (ex. Music Festival, 15<sup>th</sup> March Anniversary, Artist Retreat)
- Number of people that live or work on Gigha who are still seeking adequate housing (including those in hidden homes)

#### **Tourist Survey:**

- Would you be interested in returning to Gigha for another visit? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Overall, during your visit do you feel that you received good value for money? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- What is your opinion of the standard of service you received while on Gigha?  
☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Average ☐ Below Average ☐ Poor
- What was your opinion of the access to sites of special interest (*ie. the gardens, beaches, areas of importance to cultural heritage and to natural heritage*) and to the paths and walkways?  
☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Average ☐ Below Average ☐ Poor
- What was your opinion of the information that was available on these sites and on the paths and walkways?  
☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Average ☐ Below Average ☐ Poor
- Were any of the following important to your decision to visit Gigha (*mark all that apply*):  
☐ Natural Heritage/Environmental Quality ☐ Cultural Heritage/History  
☐ Interacting with the people of Gigha ☐ The Community buy-out of Gigha
- Are there any facilities lacking on Gigha that would have made your overall stay better?
- Were there any services that would have made your stay on Gigha better? (*please add any other comments you have*)

## **APPENDIX D: PRINCIPLES OF PERMACULTURE DESIGN**

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(As described in *Permaculture: Principles and Pathways Beyond Sustainability* by David Holmgren, 2002)

### **1) Observe and Interact**

Similar to the ideas of participant observation and action learning, permaculture design is guided by 'careful observation and thoughtful interaction' (p. 13). To design with consideration to the subtle patterns and details of ecological systems, continuous observation is carried out while interacting carefully (in a way similar to the precautionary principle) with the system. Many of the important findings of permaculture are experienced through this interplay, and it is from this interplay that we can employ effective learning cycles.

### **2) Catch and Store Energy**

Utilising laws of entropy, we must become aware of the flows of energy and acknowledge the vast sources of energy produced by natural systems. Designs should be made to facilitate the storage (or conversion) of energy to be used later. We must begin to consider the embodied energy of resources, the quality of different types of stored energy and the importance of energy efficiency in design and activities.

### **3) Obtain a Yield**

In designing systems to produce self-reliance, we must of course consider the importance of meeting our immediate needs. An important feature in permaculture design is to work to create positive feedback cycles where yields and productivity will naturally increase as an outcome of the system's functioning. In working with natural systems, designs must acknowledge the seasonal fluctuations in productivity and apply flexibility to the design to assure sustainability.

### **4) Apply Self-regulation and Accept Feedback**

This principle is rooted to the Gaia hypothesis that views the earth as a self-regulating system, and it considers the importance of both positive and negative feedback in nurturing and controlling systems. Odum's idea of tripartite altruism is applied to explain that healthy systems are designed in accordance with these priorities, 'the first priority is to survive (obtain a yield from captured energy), while the second is to pay for what we get in some way that helps maintain the future flow of energy. The third, is to contribute in some other way and direction, to the wider system, rather than seeing our own survival as an end in itself' (p. 75). Designing towards self-regulating systems that promote this understanding of energy flows is important to permaculture, though it is recognised that full self-regulation is seldom achieved.

### **5) Use and Value Renewable Resources and Services**

If stated in the language of business, this principle suggests that renewable resources provide the sources of income, while non-renewable resources should be held as capital assets. In this case, spending capital assets to meet basic necessities is unsustainable. A major factor in permaculture design is the long-term sustainability of a particular design,

thus the renewable capacities of the system is critical. This principle also considers that human intervention and complication of natural processes often results in diminishing returns and can undermine the resiliency of biological systems.

## **6) Produce No Waste**

Permaculture takes a very different view of waste than does conventional industrialised society. It sees waste, or the byproduct of one system, as an excess energy that can be applied to another system. One part of this principle does refer to designing in ways that reduce polluting and non-usable outputs from a system. However, another part of this principle is to recognise the potential of converting what are usually viewed as waste products into beneficial inputs into other systems. The usage of a combined heat and power (CHP) plant is a usage of what is often treated as the wasted heat of electricity production. For the organic gardener, green and food waste materials are composted to provide valuable organic fertilizers.

## **7) Design from Patterns to Details**

While permaculturalists naturally acknowledge the diversity and uniqueness of each site or local environment when considering a design, there is also acceptance that pattern observation can create general understandings across larger scales. In fact, this principle suggests that starting with a too focused perspective and a directive towards detail analysis can distract from developing an awareness of the natural system. By starting with more generalised patterns before moving to detailed design, it is possible to first consider the greater circumstances and trends that a detailed local design is being developed within. Permaculturists will also apply this pattern recognition when considering human interaction within the system. One feature is considering zones of usage in design, thus activities requiring a regular focus will be in zone 0 or zone 1 near the home while activities needing attention only once annually will be farthest from the home in zone 4 or 5 (first you identify your own patterns and select to which zone a specific activity should belong, then you begin to consider the details of designing each zone).

## **8) Integrate Rather than Segregate**

Holmgren suggests, '[W]e have a cultural disposition to see and believe in predatory and competitive relationships, and discount co-operative and symbiotic relationships, in nature and culture' (p. 156). This principle promotes the importance of co-operative relationships and is based on the understanding that in natural systems 'each element performs many functions' and 'each important function is supported by many elements' (p. 155). In design, attempts are made to promote complementary relationships between elements and increase the multi-functionality of each element. Permaculture designs work to integrate elements as a multi-functional whole as demonstrated in practices of companion planting, securing back-up systems and co-housing/living designs.

## **9) Use Small and Slow Solutions**

This principle promotes designing systems for small-scale functionality and energy-efficiency. Holmgren identifies the home and the garden as systems that are designed to human scale and argues that this size is one that can be readily managed. This principle also promotes

designing systems for slow movement because this is more energy-efficient and resilient than faster moving systems. 'Human scale and capacity should be the yardstick for a humane, democratic and sustainable society' (p. 181).

#### **10) Use and Value Diversity**

Holmgren suggests that diversity is the result of the balance between variety/possibility and productivity. Modern industrialisation and globalisation is based on natural (and also cultural) monoculture and leads to vulnerability. Monoculture has allowed for substantial short-term increases to productivity, but not only are these practices not sustainable they are also damaging the long-term health and future productivity of natural systems. On the other hand, supporting (bio)diversity strengthens the resilience and security of a whole system, thus system design should incorporate diversity at multiple levels (a diversity of species, a diversity of individual breeds within a species, and a diversity of designs).

#### **11) Use Edges and Value the Marginal**

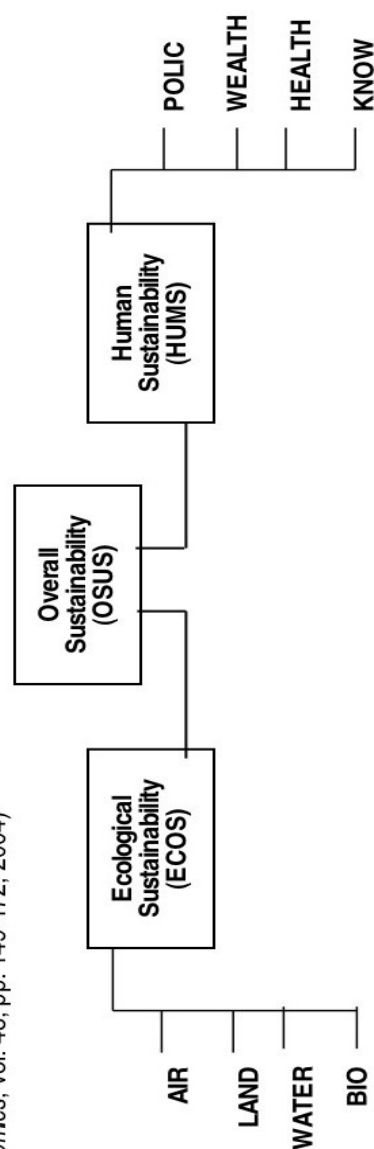
Permaculture recognises that the points where two distinct ecosystems meet and overlap (the ecotone) provide the most dynamic and productive parts of a given natural system (coastlines being one of the best examples). The edge of ecosystems is also the place where natural adaptation usually begins. Permaculture designers have established many ways for increasing the number of micro-edges in a given environment to enhance these benefits. Interestingly, the traditional three circle Venn diagram used to model sustainable development effectively depicts it as specifically a practice of creating edge or overlaps between society, environment and economy.

#### **12) Creatively Use and Respond to Change**

This final principle recognises that change is a constant of natural systems. However, rather than viewing change as a random and unpredictable force, it attempts to explain how 'the dynamic balance between stability and change contributes to design that is evolutionary' (p. 239). For human design to interact in cooperation with this principle, it is necessary to take a systematic and holistic view of the multiple forces of change that occur in any one system because we can only successfully influence change when we work with these wider forces. One suggested shift in how we design built environments is a transition from designing/building for durability towards designing for renewability. From a scientific standpoint, we must attempt to better understand the natural processes of ecological succession, natural evolution and the importance of these processes for natural stability.

## APPENDIX E: SAFE MODEL AND DEPENDENCIES OF SUSTAINABILITY COMPONENTS

(Adapted from Andriantiaholainaina, Luc A., et al. 'Evaluating Strategies for Sustainable Development: Fuzzy Logic Reasoning and Sensitivity', *Ecological Economics*, vol. 48, pp. 149-172, 2004)



### Basic Indicators used in SAFE Model:

Secondary Component	Pressure	Status	Response
<u>Ecological Components</u>			
AIR <i>air quality</i>	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Atmospheric concentrations of NO <sub>2</sub> , SO <sub>2</sub> , total suspended particulates, and lead	Fossil fuel use
	Percentage of Ozone Depletion		Clean energy production
	Other Polluting Gas Emissions (Ozone, NO <sub>x</sub> , CO, etc.)		Public transportation
LAND <i>land integrity</i>	Solid and Liquid Waste Generation	Domesticated land Current forest	Forest change
	Nuclear Waste		Clean energy production
	Population Density		Nationally protected areas
	Population Growth Rate		Urban households with garbage collection



WATER <i>water quality</i>	Urban per capita Water Usage Freshwater Withdrawals	Quality of water resources: dissolved oxygen, phosphorous, pH	Reduction of pollutants Percentage of urban wastewater treated
BIOD <i>biodiversity</i>	Threatened Plant, Fish, Mammal, Bird, Amphibian, and Reptile Species Threatened Frontier Forest	Current forest	Forest change Protected areas
<i>Potential Additions to Ecological Components</i>			
*ENERGY SOURCES	Fuel Sources for Heating, Cooking, and Transport Electricity Production Energy Conservation Methods		
*FOOD SUPPLY	Dependency on Grain Supply Ratio of Annual to Perennial Crop Production Food Miles: Distance from Production to Market		
<i>Human Components</i>			
POLIC <i>political aspects</i>	Military Spending Murders	Human rights Environmental laws and enforcement Regime (democratic—nondemocratic) GINI index Official development assistance	Government expenditure for social services

WEALTH <i>economic welfare</i>	GDP Implicit Deflator Imports Private Consumption	Total external debt ICRG risk rating GNP Institutional Investor Credit Rating Resource balance Poor households	GDP growth Exports Central government finance General government consumption
HEALTH <i>health</i>	Cases of Infectious Diseases: Measles, Tuberculosis, AIDS, etc. Infant Mortality Rate Maternal Mortality Rate	Life expectancy Percentage of one-year-old infants immunised against severe diseases: measles, polio, DPT, etc.	Number of people per doctor and per nurse Public health expenditure Daily calorie supply Access to sanitation
KNOW <i>education</i>	Ratio of Students to Teaching Staff (Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Education) Nationals Studying Abroad	Expected years of schooling: male and female Net school enrollment: primary and secondary education Number of scientists and Engineers involved in research and development	Number of libraries Public expenditure on education Personal computers Internet hosts
<u>Potential Additions to Human Components</u>			
*LEADERSHIP	Level of Commitment to Sustainability (of leaders) Number of Programmes to Advance Sustainable Development Resource Allocation towards Development Projects Research for Sustainable Development		
*PARTICIPATION	Ability of Population to Participate in Decision Making Infrastructure for Participation Level to which Population can Influence Policy		

## APPENDIX F: PROFESSIONAL CAPACITIES IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Subject Basis	Level of Influence (defined as <i>Small, Medium, or Large</i> )			Examples/Comments	Sources of Influence
	Theory	Policy	Practice		
<b>Research/Academic</b>	L influence; main focus of work	M to L influence; providing guidance to policy making	S influence; little translation of theory into practical dimensions	has both natural science and social science components	influenced by perfectionist thinking and ideal scenarios, often no real world basis
<b>Political</b>	S to M influence; in regards to sustainable development theory	L influence; main focus of work	S influence; though some good work in areas like participation	models for deliberation & consensus exist but are not commonly applied	main influence for policy is from natural science and land use planning
<b>Scientific</b>	L influence; through understanding of natural systems	L influence; through EIAs and conservation practices	L influence; in guiding best practice, but difficulty in translation	soft and whole systems theories is key to ecological thinking	influenced by anomalies in own field, also from technology innovations
<b>Technological</b>	S influence; utilises theory, but not a strong effect on change	M influence; from practical application but little effect on change	L influence; main focus of work in practical solutions	strong examples in renewable technology and eco-building	main influence from within field, includes large research sector
<b>Development Practitioners</b>	S to M influence; exchange w/ academia, but strong divide remains	S to M influence; NGOs in Global South may have M/L influence	L influence; main focus of work	strong focus on local participation through NGO work in Global South	main influence from experiential learning and practical applications
<b>Planning</b>	S influence; utilises theory, but not a strong effect on change	L influence; main focus of work	M influence; shapes practical outcomes through policy	strong scientific/land usage approach; less interest in social patterns	process of land zoning and labeling of distinct activities is key priority
<b>Economic</b>	L influence; main focus of work	S influence; little effort in policy to adapt economic system	S influence; little effort in practice to adapt economic system	many existing theories of ecological economics but almost no application	most theories must be justified in context of existing market system
<b>Project/Activity Specific</b>	S influence; specific activities are not analysed at theory level	S influence; though some projects gain popular support	L influence; in establishing individual, best practice activities	wide variety of projects that mainly occur as one-off activities	influenced by advances in technology and research
<b>Whole Systems/Sustainability Specialists</b>	M to L influence; main focus of work is on perfecting models of whole systems thinking	S influence; these new theoretical approaches have had little influence of policy	S to M influence; some rogue individuals establishing practical development programmes	the number of specialist trained in sustainability and whole system approaches is still limited	attempts to correlate knowledge of other subject areas into a holistic understanding

## APPENDIX G: SUSTAINABILITY CHECKLIST FOR ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

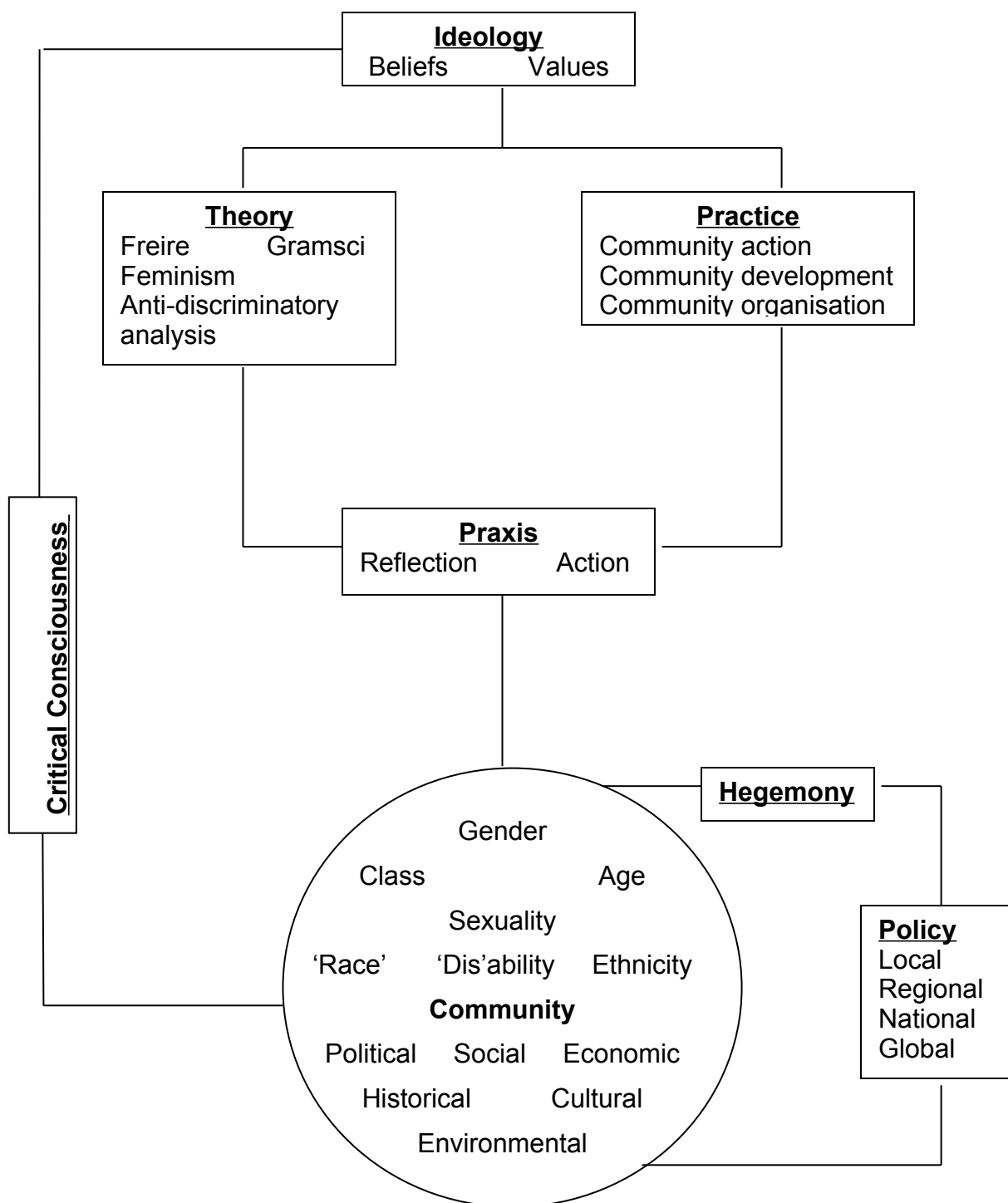
(copied in full from *Argyll and Bute Local Plan*, June 2006: 6)

### Sustainability Checklist

Q	Community	Yes	No	N/A	Details
1	Does the project have widespread community support?				
2	Does the project strengthen the local community?				
3	Does the project help to ensure everyone has access to the same level of resources?				
4	Does the project have any impact on existing facilities or other organisations?				
<b>Economy</b>					
5	Does it help increase value of local products or make sustainable use of existing resources?				
6	Does it create jobs or retain existing jobs?				
7	Does it help to develop skills/knowledge of local people?				
8	Does the project purchase goods and services locally?				
9	Does the project impact on existing businesses?				
<b>Environment</b>					
10	Does the project help reduce waste and pollution?				
11	Has the project undertaken an Area Capacity Evaluation (ACE)?				
12	Does the project minimise energy use and/or support the development or use of renewable energy?				
13	Does the project provide or safeguard access to and awareness of wildlife and open spaces?				
14	Does the project safeguard, protect and enhance the natural environment and support local biodiversity?				
15	Has the project considered the re-use of brown field land or an existing building?				
<b>The Future</b>					
16	Will the project bring positive changes?				
17	Does the project link with existing services or organisations?				
18	Does the project have any long-term impacts on the environment?				

## APPENDIX H: MODEL OF CRITICAL PRAXIS

(copied in full from Ledwith, Margaret. *Community Development: A critical approach*. 2005: 40)



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